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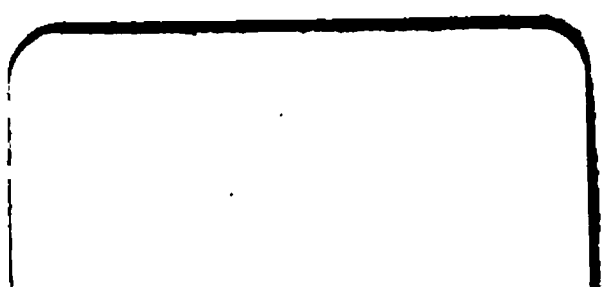
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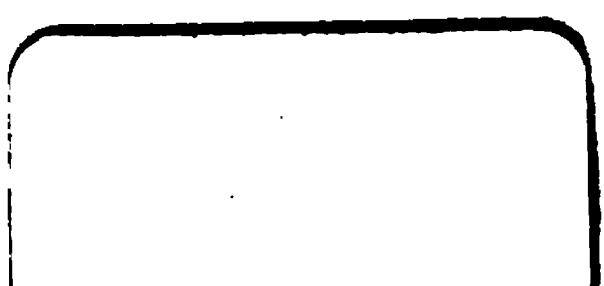




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**R E P O R T S**  
**OF**  
**DECISIONS**  
**IN**  
**THE SUPREME COURT**  
**OF**  
**THE UNITED STATES.**

**By SAMUEL F. MILLER, LL.D.,**  
**AN ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE COURT.**

**VOLUME I.**

**WASHINGTON, D. C.**  
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## P R E F A C E.

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THE manner in which the professional public received the work of the late Judge Curtis, in condensing into twenty-one volumes the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, which occupy fifty-seven volumes of the regular reports, justifies the belief that a continuation of that plan will meet a want very generally felt. It is not possible, however, to condense as much in the more modern reports as he did in the older ones, though pursuing exactly the same plan, for the reason that the earlier reporters gave much more extended notes of the argument of counsel, and much fuller statements of the cases as found in the records, on which they were decided; and it is in those particulars that the abridgment consists.

But still it is believed that, in the vastly increased expense of keeping up with reports of this and other courts, such abridged reports of those decisions as can be made on that plan will be found to be a very acceptable reduction of their cost.

In preparing the syllabus at the head of each case, and the index at the end of the volume, in which are to be found the principal labors I have bestowed upon the work, I have given that careful attention which arose out of my own desire to understand the principles involved in the decisions, and my sense of the value of such aids to those engaged in practice, in facilitating their investigations.

The second volume of this series is now in the printer's hands, and my present purpose is to continue it, as speedily as my other duties will permit, through the remaining volumes of Howard's Reports and the first and second of Black's. Whether it will be extended beyond that will depend, among other considerations, upon the favor with which those now promised are received.

S F. M.



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**THE DECISIONS**  
**OF THE**  
**SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES,**  
**AT**  
**DECEMBER TERM, 1855.**

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**JUSTICES OF THE COURT.**

**HON. ROGER B. TANEY, CHIEF JUSTICE.**

**HON. JOHN MCLEAN,**

**HON. JAMES M. WAYNE,**

**HON. JOHN CATRON,**

**HON. PETER V. DANIEL,**

**HON. SAMUEL NELSON,**

**HON. ROBERT C. GRIER,**

**HON. BENJAMIN R. CURTIS,**

**HON. JOHN A. CAMPBELL,**

**CALEB CUSHING, ATTORNEY GENERAL.**

**WILLIAM T. CARROLL, CLERK.**

**BENJAMIN C. HOWARD, REPORTER.**

**JONAH D. HOOVER, MARSHAL.**

**ASSOCIATE JUSTICES.**

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**THE UNITED STATES, Appellants, v. PEARSON B. BRADING.**

**18 H. 1.**

**MEXICAN GRANTS IN CALIFORNIA.**

1. A native of the United States, naturalized as a citizen of Mexico, did not forfeit his right, under a grant from Mexico, by joining the forces of the United States in the war by which we took possession of California, nor did that fact amount to an abandonment of the land.
2. Failure to obtain juridical possession, have the land surveyed, and build a house on it, which are conditions of the grant, do not forfeit it when sufficient reasons are given for non-compliance.
3. The approval of the departmental assembly, though necessary to a perfect grant, is not absolutely essential to a confirmation under the act of Congress of March 3, 1851. The failure of the governor to report the case to the assembly for its approval does not destroy the grantee's rights absolutely.

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APPEAL from the district court for the northern district of California. The statement of the case in the opinion of the court, and in those of the dissenting judges, is sufficient for a full comprehension of the principles involved in it.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the United States.

*Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Bibb, and Mr. Volney E. Howard*, for appellee.

[ \* 3 ] \* Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court.

We find in the record of this appeal, that Reading, the appellee, was an immigrant from the United States, in the then Mexican territory of California, in the year 1842, and that he afterwards became a citizen of the Mexican republic. After residing there for two years, he petitioned the governor, Michel Torena, for a grant of land called Buena Ventura, situated on the bank of the River Sacramento, bounded on the north by vacant lands, on the east by the River Sacramento, and on the south and west by vacant lands, according to a plat annexed to his petition. The governor referred the petition to the secretary of state for information concerning it. The secretary, in reply, says, the petitioner was a proper person for the governor's favor, and, upon the official certificate of John A. Sutter, (who was military commandant of the northern frontier of California, and charged with civil jurisdiction also,) he declares that the land asked for was vacant, and could be granted. The governor directed the title to be issued, and it was prepared for his signature.

It is as follows:

“Citizen Michel Torena, General of Brigade of the Mexican Army, Adjutant General of the Staff of the same, Governor, Commandant General, and Inspector of the Department of the Californias.

“Whereas, Don Pearson B. Reading—a Mexican by naturalization—has made application, for his personal benefit, for the land known by the name of Buena Ventura, on the margin of

[ \* 4 ] \* the River Sacramento, from the creek called Lodo, (Lodoso, *Muddy*,) which is on the north as far as the Island de Sangre, with six square leagues in extent; and the proper proceedings and investigations having been previously complied with, according to the provisions of the laws and regulations concerning the matter, by virtue of the authority vested in me, in the name of the Mexican nation, I have granted to him said land, subject to the approval of the most excellent departmental assembly.”

There are also conditions annexed to the grant, which may be seen in the reporter's statement of the case. The grant was signed by



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the governor, and countersigned by the secretary of state, on the 4th of December, 1844, and entered into the archives of the territory on the same day, with an order from the governor that the title, "being held as valid," should be delivered to the interested party for his security and other purposes.

The power of the governor to make such a grant of land is admitted. The regularity and genuineness of the entire proceeding, and its entry into the archives of the territory, are not disputed; but Reading's right to a confirmation of it is denied, upon several grounds. Each objection shall have due consideration, not because all of them require it, but to prevent the same points from being urged again in cases of a like kind.

It is said, the grant was provisional only, having been made subject to the approval of the departmental assembly; and, as that had not been given, that it passed no such interest in the land to Reading as entitled him to a confirmation of the grant. Other objections were urged against the confirmation of it, arising out of the national status of Reading when he received the grant, and also out of the fact that, in the war between Mexico and the United States, he left the standard of the former, and joined the American forces which invaded California. And it was said, as it had been in Fremont's case, that he lost whatever right he had to the land, and subjected it to be denounced by any other person, because he had not complied with the condition to build a house upon it, and to have it inhabited, within a year from the date of the grant, and because he had omitted to obtain a judicial possession and measurement, or survey of it. The last two objections are charges of negligence, which must be determined by the proofs in the cause. In our opinion, they do not show either negligence or omission in the particulars mentioned. The witness, Hensley, says, it was upon his suggestion that Reading applied for the land. He knew the locality of it, from having been there. After stating that he had seen a paper purporting to be a grant of the land, dated in December, 1844, he says that Reading visited it in August, 1845, and that they were ten days together upon the land, looking for \*suitable locations for fields and building sites. [ \* 5 ] That Reading then put upon it a Frenchman named Julian, to build a house for him and to keep possession of it; that, at that time, Reading placed upon the land horses and cattle. That the house was built. It was afterwards burnt by the Indians, and Julian was killed by them. Ford, another witness, who went to that part of the country in March, 1846, as one of a military company to quell an outbreak of the Indians, confirms Hensley's state-

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ment in respect to Julian's possession of the land for Reading, but says that he had been forced by the Indians to abandon the house he had built; and that the horses which had been put upon the land, or others belonging to Reading, had been driven from it by Julian, as it was impossible to keep them there on account of the hostilities of the Indians. And Sutter accounts very satisfactorily for Reading's absence from the land during the years of 1845 and 1846, in his reply to the question, if it would have been safe for Reading to have resided personally on his ranche during the revolution and hostilities of those years, when he says, Major Reading had hardly time to do so, as he was nearly all the time required by me to do service. Sutter had said before, in his answer to another question, that he had been, in the years 1844-1846, military commandant of the northern frontier of California, and was also charged with the civil jurisdiction in all that region of country; and, as such, that he had official power to order Reading upon military duty, and that he had done so. It appears also from his testimony, that he kept Reading so employed in the service of Mexico, with the exception of short intervals, from the early part of the spring of 1845 into a part of the year 1846, until Col. Fremont invaded Upper California, when, shortly afterwards, Reading joined him. The facts of the case, in respect to the occupation and cultivation of the land by Reading's agent, disprove the objection. Such an agency for building a house, and having it inhabited by the agent, was as good a compliance with the condition requiring that to be done, as if it had been done personally by Reading. The objection, that he had disregarded the condition of the grant, in not having obtained judicial possession and a survey of the land, is answered by the declaration of Sutter, the only person officially authorized to give it, and without whose permission no survey could have been made. He says, that Reading applied to him in the spring of the year 1845, to be put in judicial possession of the land, but that he had not complied, because his military engagements in the field against the Indians, just before and following the application, had disabled him from doing so; and that the revolution which followed Col. Fre-

mont's coming was his reason for not having given to  
[ \* 6 ] \* Reading judicial possession, according to the prayer of his petition for that purpose.

We have noticed these minor objections against the confirmation of this grant, that the real merits of the transaction might be known, and not because it was essential to the decision of the case. For, even if the proofs in the case, in respect to the grantee's occupancy of the land, had been otherwise than they have been shown

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to have been, his title to it would not have been lost, because the conditions annexed to the grant had not been fulfilled; unless it could be shown that there had been on his part such unreasonable delay or want of effort to fulfill those conditions as would amount to an intention "to abandon his claim" before the Mexican power had ceased to exist, and that he was now endeavoring to resume it, from its enhanced value under the government of the United States. This court, considering, in Fremont's case, 17 How. 560, the same objections which are now under our consideration in this, uses the following language: "Regarding the grant to Alvarado, therefore, as having given him a vested interest in the quantity of land therein specified, we proceed to inquire whether there was any breach of the conditions annexed to it, during the continuance of the Mexican authorities, which forfeited his right, and revested the title in the government. The main objection on this ground is the omission to take possession, to have the land surveyed, and to build a house on it within the time limited in the conditions. It is a sufficient answer to this objection to say, that negligence in respect to these conditions and others annexed to the grant, does not, of itself, always forfeit the right of the grantee."

"It subjects the land to be denounced by another, but the conditions do not declare the land forfeited to the State upon the failure of the grantee to perform them. The chief objects of these grants was to colonize and settle the vacant lands. The grants were usually made for that purpose, without any other consideration and without any claim of the grantee on the bounty or justice of the government. But the public had no interest in forfeiting them, even in these cases, unless some other person desired and was ready to occupy them, and thus carry out the policy of extending its settlements. They seem to have been intended to stimulate the grantee to prompt action in settling and colonizing the land, by making it open to appropriation by others in case of his failure to perform them. But, as between him and the government, there is nothing in the language of the conditions, taking them altogether, nor in their evident object and policy, which would justify the court in declaring the land forfeited to the government, where no other person sought to appropriate them, and \*their per- [ \* 7 ] formance had not been unreasonably delayed. Nor do we find anything in the practice and usages of the Mexican tribunals, as far as we can ascertain, that would lead to a contrary conclusion."

It was also urged, that no title passed by the grant, as it had not received the approval of the departmental assembly. Our examination of the decrees of the 18th of August, 1824, and of the 21st

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of November, 1828, leads us to a different result. A right and title passed by the governor's grant, but its definitive validity was suspended for the approval of the assembly; and so it continued to be suspended, until its approbation had been given, when the title became definitive. But if that was refused, it did not take away, nor in any way qualify, the grantee's title, but only kept its final validity in suspense until the grant had been rejected by the supreme government of the republic; it being the duty of the governor, after its rejection by the assembly, to forward the documents of title to the supreme government for its decision.

Further, we must infer from the same decrees, and particularly from the 5th article of that of the 21st of November, 1828, that it was the duty of the governor, and not that of the grantee, to forward grants of land given by him to the departmental assembly. The latter might very well, after that had been done by the governor, solicit the approval of the assembly, personally or by an agent, by all those considerations which had gained him the governor's favor. But if the governor failed to transmit the documents, from any cause whatever, the grantee's title continued to be just what it was when the grant was given. Nor could any neglect or refusal of the governor to transmit his grantee's documents of title to the assembly take from him his right in the land, if the grant had been made with a due regard to what the decree of the 18th of August, 1824, required, and in conformity with the cautionary regulations of that of the 21st of November, 1828. In other words, from our reading of those decrees, the governor could not either directly recall a grant made by him, or indirectly nullify it when it had been conferred conformably with them. Those decrees prescribe a course of action for such grants, and impose upon the governor the execution of it. When, then, the archives of the territory of the Californias do not show that the governor's grants of land had been sent to the departmental assembly; or that, having been sent, they had been rejected, and that after such rejection they had not been sent, by the governor making the grants, to the supreme executive government for its final decision—the titles of the grantees are just what they were in their beginnings, and are sufficient, now that the territory

[ \* 8 ] has been transferred to \* the United States, for confirmation under its statute of the 3d of March, 1851. Such grants, so circumstanced, are equitable titles, protected by the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and by the laws and usages of nations concerning the rights of property, real and personal, of the inhabitants of a ceded or conquered country. And, we may add, they are pro-

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tected by the usages of Mexico in respect to such grants, the archives of California showing that a very large portion of the land in the occupation of its inhabitants was held by titles wanting the approval of the departmental assembly. And we entirely concur with Mr. Commissioner Hall, in the opinion given by him in the case, that the want of such approval in so many instances, as are shown by the archives of the territory, was owing to the fact that the political affairs of the territory had been in confusion for several years preceding its cession to the United States. That the assembly had seldom been called together, and when assembled its sessions had been brief, and occupied with the consideration of pressing matters of a public character; and that the governors making grants had very much neglected to present them to the assembly for approval. We are of the opinion that Reading's right to a confirmation of his grant cannot be refused on account of its not having had the approval of the departmental assembly.

We will now dispose of the objections to a confirmation of this grant, connected with Reading's national status, when he received his documentary title, and with his having subsequently joined the forces of the United States in the war with Mexico. It is said he was not a naturalized citizen of the Mexican republic when the grant was conferred, and that, if he was, his title was forfeited to Mexico, for having fought against her; and, if not forfeited, that his course in that particular should be taken as full proof of his intention to abandon all right and title to the land.

The case, as it is made in the record, does not require from us a particular consideration of the circumstances under which foreigners might receive and retain grants of land, by the decrees of 1824 and 1828. It is enough to say, that the Mexican republic, from the time of its emancipation from Spain, always dealt most liberally with foreigners in its anxiety to colonize its vacant lands. It invited them to settle upon her territory, by promises of protection of them and their property. And, by the first article of the decree of 1828, for colonizing her vacant lands, foreigners were included with those to whom the governors of the territories might make grants of land for the purpose of cultivating and inhabiting them.

But the fact of Reading's Mexican naturalization is not an \*open question in this case. The record admits the regularity and genuineness of his documentary title for the land. The admission is as good for all of the necessary recitals in them, as it is for the main purpose for which they were inserted in those documents. That was a grant of the land. The recitals are those "requisite conditions," stated in the second and third para-



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graphs of the decree of November 21, 1828, concerning which the governor is enjoined to seek for information, which, when affirmatively ascertained, make the foundation for the governor's exercise of his power to grant vacant lands.

In his petition for a grant, Reading says he is a native of the United States, and had resided in the country since the year 1842. The governor states him to be a Mexican by naturalization, in the grant, and "that as the proper proceedings and investigations had been previously complied with, according to the provisions and laws and regulations concerning the matter," he, in virtue of the authority vested in him, grants to the petitioner the land known as Buena Ventura, on the margin of the River Sacramento, from the creek called Lodo, (Lodoso, Muddy,) which is on the north as far as the Island de Sangre, with six square leagues in extent, subject to the approval of the departmental assembly, and on the conditions annexed to the grant. Now, this is not merely the language of clerical formality, though it might be the same from usage in like cases, but it is a declaration of the governor's official and judicial conscience; that his power to make the grant has been used in a fit case, for the approval of it by the departmental assembly, or for the decision of the supreme executive government, in case the action of the assembly should make it necessary for him to carry it there for its decision.

We consider it conclusive of the fact of the petitioner's Mexican naturalization, precluding all other inquiries about it, in our consideration of this case, by the record.

The last objection was that Major Reading having joined the forces of the United States in the war with Mexico, had forfeited his right to the approval of his grant by the authorities of Mexico, which the United States might take advantage of to defeat his claim; and, if not so, that the fact itself raised a strong presumption that he meant to abandon it. As to the last, there is nothing in the record from which such an intention can be inferred, and the fact itself is insufficient for such a purpose. There is much to show the reverse, if the circumstances and condition of the country are considered, when Reading joined Col. Fremont. There had been in the year 1845 a successful revolution in California, by which Torena, the governor, had been deposed; his powers [ \* 10 ] had been assumed by Colonel Don \* José Castro, without any authority from the supreme executive government of Mexico. It was followed by Indian outbreaks, with marked hostility to the foreigners who had settled in California, and more so against those from the United States than to any other class. If



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they were not instigated, they certainly were not discouraged by the existing government. Its conduct indicated its wishes, if not a fixed design, to drive the naturalized immigrants from the United States from their homes and from the territory. In such a state of things, Col. Fremont carried the war into California. Neither the supreme government, nor the territorial, gave protection to its inhabitants, and it had become part of the war policy of Mexico to suspect the fidelity of settlers from the United States to their Mexican allegiance, and plans were formed to get rid of them. We take the fact from other authentic sources, and Sutter speaks of it in the record, with positiveness as to himself. Reading had good cause for like apprehensions, and having joined Col. Fremont under such circumstances, his conduct may be said to have been blameless of all treachery to Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

But if they were otherwise, and Reading had voluntarily, and without circumstances to excuse it, abandoned his Mexican allegiance for that of his nativity, the United States could not urge it as a cause for the forfeiture of his title to land acquired from Mexican laws, and in the mode in which those laws had been executed by the governors of the states and territories of that republic.

War has its incidents and rights for persons and for nations, unlike any that can occur in a time of peace, and they make the law applicable to them. One of them is, that by the law of war either party to it may receive and list among his troops such as quit the other, unless there has been a previous stipulation that they shall not be received. But when they have been received, a high moral faith and irrevocable honor, sanctioned by the usages of all nations, gives to them protection personally, and security for all that they have or may possess. They are exempt also from all reproach from the sovereignty to which their services have been rendered. Nothing that they claim as their own can be taken from them, upon the imputation that they had forfeited or meant to relinquish it by the abandonment of their allegiance to the sovereignty which they had left.

The reverse would partake of Sir Guy Carleton's "impossible infamy,"<sup>2</sup> though when used by him in reply to a letter from \*General Washington, not so well applied, as it [ \* 11 ] might be, if the United States was allowed to interpret

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<sup>1</sup> See Senate Document, report by General Cass, of 23d of February, 1848, on California claims. Statement of Samuel I. Hensley, Richard Owens, and deposition of Wm. N. Lokes.

<sup>2</sup> Col. Benton's Thirty Years' View, vol. i, p. 90.

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the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, so as to take for itself Reading's land, because he had joined its forces in the war with Mexico.

Having considered every objection made to the confirmation of this grant, and believing no one available for such a purpose, it only remains for us to declare our affirmance of the award of the commissioners and the decree of the district court.

Mr. Justice DANIEL dissented.

Mr. Justice CATRON. I agree that the grant to Major Reading describes the land he applied for so that it can be ascertained and surveyed; and secondly, that he took possession and built a house on it within a year after the execution of the grant, in compliance with its material condition, and that the judgments of the board of commissioners, and of the district court of California, were proper. But there are no facts in the case on which any question can be raised, whether the grantee, Reading, was subject to be denounced for failing to take possession and building a house; and therefore I cannot agree that the doctrine should be introduced into the opinion here, as it may embarrass the court in other cases in which the question will properly arise.

Nor can I be committed to the assumption extracted from the Fremont case, and sought to be sanctioned in the principal opinion, that a Spanish concession authorizing the grantee to occupy and cultivate, is indefeasible in its operation, although the land was never possessed nor occupied, unless some person shall denounce the land as forfeited, and obtain a second concession for it from the governor. The assumption signifies that every incipient concession made by Mexican authority secured the land to the claimant without the performance of any one condition; that the claimant is only bound to prove that the concession was signed by a person holding the office of governor at the time; or, in other words, that the grant was not forged. How ruinous such an assertion may eventually prove in the cases of old and abandoned claims is quite manifest, as it must apply in all cases where the same land is covered by different grants; the oldest will of course be the better title, unless the younger grantee can show that the land had been denounced, and the first grant revoked by the authority that made it. When such a case is presented, and we are called on to consider this doctrine of a "denouncement," I wish to be free to do so, unaffected by previous assertions and *dicta* in cases that did not involve the question, and in which it was never considered by me.

[ \* 12 ]     \* That the Fremont case did not involve the doctrine is manifest; it was a floating claim for 50,000 arpens of

land, subject to be located by selection and survey in any part of a large section of country bounded by rivers and mountains; and the opinion of this court was, that Alvarado took, and Col. Fremont held, as assignee of Alvarado, a pervading interest in the entire section of country, and that the land might be taken anywhere within it, so that the rights of others were not disturbed. The rule is, so far as I know, throughout the former dominions of Spain on this continent, where donations of land have been made for the purposes of cultivation or pasturage, and where the donations imposed the condition that the grantee should occupy and cultivate the land, and he failed to do so or abandoned it, that the claim under it was defeated.

It is assumed that the Fremont claim stood on the footing of that of General Greene, for 25,000 acres derived from North Carolina, to be located and surveyed within the military district by commissioners designated for that purpose.

General Greene's grant, in effect, was a floating claim, just such an interest in the lands as was reserved for the officers and soldiers of the North Carolina line, by virtue of warrants issued to them, and which might be located in a land office in any part of the military district. This is the doctrine held by the courts of Tennessee, where the land lies, in reference to General Greene's grant, and the interest that warrant holders had in common with General Greene, as will be seen by the case of *Neal v. E. T. College*, 6 Yerger, 190.

General Greene acquired no specific land; he acquired by the act of the legislature a promise of the specified quantity, to be ascertained by a subsequent survey and allotment. And this was the condition of the Fremont title, as this court decided.

Now, how was it possible for any one to apply to a Mexican governor, and ask for Alvarado's land, because he did not inhabit or cultivate it, or because he had abandoned it? He never had any land; he only had a promise of land, or a common interest in a large tract of country; and the idea of any one denouncing a holder of this floating claim, and asking for the particular land it covered, would have been unmeaning and idle.

The Fremont case, therefore, furnished no grounds for raising or deciding the question of denouncement, and the repeal of the first grant and of regrant to another. What is now claimed for the opinion in that case, as part of the court's legitimate decision, can only be treated as an assertion, and as part of the reasoning of the court in coming to a conclusion on other questions involved in the controversy.

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Cases of denouncement in advance of a second grant for [ \* 13 ] the \* same land are unknown in California, so far as we are advised; and the result of holding this proceeding necessary before a second grant could be made, (although no survey of the first had been secured, nor any possession taken,) must result in the conclusion that, among several concessions for the same land, the oldest will hold it; and those in possession under younger grants must yield the possession. This is the common-law doctrine on which the Fremont case is supposed to have been decided. But is this the true rule as regards double grants, according to the Spanish law, as administered in countries formerly owned and governed by Spain?

The law has been established in Louisiana for nearly forty years, that where the Spanish authorities have granted the same land twice, and the younger grantee has taken possession and performed the conditions of inhabitation and cultivation, he is entitled to hold the land; and this was held in contests between the first and second grantees, and in cases where no denouncement had been made in favor of the younger grantee. *Boissier et al. v. Metayer*, 5 Mar. R. 678, (1818;); *Gonsanlier's Heirs v. Brashear*, 5 Martin's N. S. 33; *Baker v. Thomas*, 2 Louisiana R. 634; *Brossard v. Gonsanlier*, 12 Robinson's R. 1.

The correctness of these decisions I have never doubted, and they have been substantially followed by this court, when it held, as it has often done, that a concession or first decree for land, over which no ownership was exercised or possession taken during the existence of the Spanish government, was inoperative, and imposed no obligation on the United States to confirm the title. It was so held in the case of *The United States v. Boisdoré*, 11 How. 96, which has been followed in various other cases since.

With this explanation, I concur in the affirmance of the judgment.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL. I concur.

Mr. Justice DANIEL. I am unable to concur in the decision of the court in this case.

Waiving in its consideration every exception to the proofs of the naturalization of the appellee, and those also taken to the locality of the subject claimed by him as being forbidden territory, there are other grounds of objection which appear to be conclusive against the pretensions of the appellee.

This was an application to the board of commissioners, for the

confirmation of a grant or title alleged to have been made to the appellee by the Mexican government, anterior to the cession of \* California to the United States. To entitle the [ 14 \* ] applicant to such confirmation, it was indispensable for him to show that he occupied such a position with respect to the Mexican government as would have enabled him to perfect his title, had there been no relinquishment of the sovereignty of the country by the granting power. It cannot be denied that a necessary ingredient in a complete title under the Mexican government, was the approbation of the departmental assembly; and the very act itself of the application to the commissioners for a confirmation of title concedes the position, that without such an approval the title must be defective. I cannot concur with the court in thinking that the excuse offered for not obtaining the approbation of the departmental assembly, was a sufficient one; and much less can I suppose that, by such an excuse, an indispensable requisite to the completion of titles could be wholly dispensed with. To tolerate such a position, would render the validity of titles to any and every extent dependent upon the ignorance, the diligence, or the corruption of persons interested in reducing them to such an attitude of uncertainty. Even should it be admitted that there was no particular limit prescribed as to the time of obtaining the sanction of the departmental assembly, and that the appellee might have been excusable for omitting or failing in this requisite, for the time being, still, the conclusion remains unshaken, that, without such approbation, there could by the law of Mexico be no title. If this be true, the objection operates *à multo fortiori* if it be shown that not only was that requisite of approbation wanted, but that its obtention was, by the conduct of the appellee himself, rendered impossible; and under this aspect of the case is presented the stronger ground upon which the claim of the appellee should have been condemned and rejected. This is an application for the confirmation of a grant or title alleged to have been made by the Mexican government to the appellee, as one of the citizens of the Mexican republic.

In order to have invested the appellee with any right as derived from that republic, had its sovereignty over the country remained unchanged, he surely would have been bound to show the continuation of his allegiance to that republic, and the maintenance of those relations, and the fulfillment of those duties, in the existence of which the bounty of the State to him had its origin and motive; at all events, he would be compelled to show himself exempt from the violation of the most sacred obligations which any citizen or subject can sustain to that country and government to which his

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allegiance is owing. Should he violate such obligation, and become a rebel or traitor to that government, he not only can [ \* 15 ] have no merits in the view of that \* government, but he becomes obnoxious to the forfeiture of both property and life.

In this case, the appellee seeks the confirmation of a claim derived confessedly from the republic of Mexico; at the same time, by his own showing, and by the testimony of others, it is established undeniably, that before his title was perfected, he became a rebel against that republic, and made every exertion for its destruction. Nay, this case exhibits the inconsistency of urging a right founded on duties sustained to the Mexican republic, with the assumption at the same time of merit deduced from the admitted facts of hostility and faithlessness to that government. The appellee can have no rights to be claimed from or through the Mexican government, to which he became an open enemy. By his conduct he completely abrogated every such right, and became, as respects that government, punishable as a state criminal; and thus not only failed to obtain that sanction without which his title was defective, namely, the approbation of the departmental assembly of Mexico, but, by his own voluntary conduct, rendered its procurement, upon every principle of public law, public or political policy or necessity, or of private morality, altogether impossible.

Were the appellee urging a claim as one deduced from the government of the United States, and originating in services rendered to them, he might then plead his merits with reference to this government in support of his title; but he is claiming a title from Mexico under the stress of Mexican laws; and he proves that by those laws, as they would be under like circumstances by the laws of every country—by the first of all laws, that of self-preservation—his pretensions must be repudiated and condemned. Strange as it may be, we have heard it earnestly pressed as commending this claim to the favorable consideration of this court, that the appellee, after obtaining his incipient grant as a Mexican citizen, and upon the foundation and principles of duty to Mexico, deserted that country when in flagrant war with an enemy, and contributed his utmost exertions for her conquest by that enemy. Were the pretensions of the appellee based upon services rendered to the United States, and were the origin and character of these pretensions to be sought for in the bounty and power of the United States, there might be consistency and integrity in this argument; but so far is this from being true as to the origin and nature of these pretensions, it is shown that these had their origin in that bounty which



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he has forfeited, and under those obligations which were binding upon the appellee, and which he has deserted and betrayed. The only obligations sustained by the United States to the citizens of Mexico are those which, by their substitution for the government of Mexico, \* the former have by express stipula- [ \* 16 ] tion or by necessary implication assumed.

The appellee, then, having unquestionably forfeited every pretension of right as against Mexico, deserted and assailed by him, the United States, as the successors to the sovereignty of Mexico, can sustain no obligation with respect to him in connection with this claim. I think, therefore, that the decision of the court below should be reversed, and petition of the appellee dismissed.

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McLEAN and BASS, Executors of H. R. W. HILL, Appellants, v. JAMES L. MEEK, Administrator of JOSEPH MEEK, and others.

18 H. 16.

ADMINISTRATION IN DIFFERENT STATES.

1. Such administrations are independent of each other. Each has jurisdiction alone, co-extensive with the State in which it was granted, over assets within its limits.
2. A judgment establishing a debt against the estate in a suit against one of these administrators is not evidence in a suit against the other in the other State; nor does it operate to prevent the bar of the statute of limitations in the latter. *Stacy v. Thrasher*, 6 How. 44.

THE case, which was an appeal from the circuit court for the southern district of Mississippi, is well stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for appellant.

*Mr. Harris*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 17 ] Hill and McLean sued James L. Meek, administrator of \* Joseph Meek, by bill in equity, in the circuit court of [ \* 18 ] the United States for the southern district of Mississippi, for upwards of \$20,000, alleged to be due the complainants by Joseph Meek at the time of his death.

He died in February, 1838, and was then domiciled in Davidson county, Tennessee. In September, 1838, Jesse Meek was appointed administrator of Joseph Meek's estate in said county. In November, 1840, the estate was alleged to be insolvent, and a bill was filed in the chancery court exercising jurisdiction in

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Davidson county, by Jesse Meek, the then administrator, and John Munn and his wife, who was a daughter of Joseph Meek, setting forth the insolvency, and praying for judicial administration of the assets among the creditors of the deceased, according to the statute of that State. To this bill the creditors were the proper defendants, and entitled to share the assets ratably. The other children of the deceased were also made defendants, and acted by their guardian.

Nathaniel and James Dick and Co. presented a claim for allowance of \$21,445, and which was allowed by the chancery court in May, 1846, and about \$2,000 of it was afterwards paid out of the assets distributed; and for the balance remaining unpaid the present bill was filed, seeking a discovery of assets from the administrator in Mississippi, and payment therefrom.

The evidence relied on to sustain the suit and establish the demand was a copy of the record from the chancery court of Tennessee; and the principal question is, whether this proceeding bound the administrator or affected the assets in Mississippi.

There is one circumstance worthy of explanation. Jesse Meek administered in Mississippi, 30th February, 1838, on Joseph Meek's estate, but his letters were revoked in 1841, and John Munn was appointed administrator *de bonis non*, and afterwards James L. Meek was appointed, and superseded Munn; and James L. is here sued.

During the contest in the Tennessee court, when Dick and Co. established their demand, Jesse Meek was the Tennessee administrator, and Munn and Joseph L. Meek were successively administrators in Mississippi.

These administrations were independent of each other; the respective administrators represented Meek, the deceased intestate, by an authority co-extensive only with the State where the letters of administration were granted, and had jurisdiction of the assets there, and were accountable to creditors and distributees according to the laws of the State granting the authority. No connection existed, or could exist, between them, and therefore a recovery against the one in Tennessee was no evidence against the other in Mississippi. *Stacy v. Thrasher*, 6 How. 44, lays down this distinct rule.

[ \* 19 ]     \*But if there was evidence of the demand, as alleged, and which we do not doubt exists, yet it is only evidence of an open account existing at the time of Joseph Meek's death, in 1838, and therefore subject to be barred by the act of limitations in Mississippi barring such claims, if suit is not brought to enforce



them within three years next after the cause of action accrued. The answers of the administrator and heirs of Joseph Meek rely on the act of limitations as a bar to relief, and which bar would necessarily be allowed, if the cause was remanded, so that further evidence might be introduced. As it now stands, however, there is no evidence of the demand, and therefore we order that the decree of the circuit court shall be affirmed.

**JACOB KISSELL, Plaintiff in Error, v. THE BOARD OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND DIRECTORS OF THE ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

18 H. 19.

**COMMON FIELD AND OUT-LOTS OF THE VILLAGES OF MISSOURI.**

1. Under the acts of Congress of June 13, 1812, May 26, 1824, and January 27, 1831, concerning these lots, all the title of the United States passed to the State of Missouri, or to the inhabitants of the towns, the former, to be disposed of or regulated for the use of schools, as the legislature of the State might direct.
2. The legislature of Missouri vested this interest in the board of commissioners of the St. Louis public schools, so far as the lots of that town were concerned.
3. The certificate of the surveyor, made in 1843, designating these out-lots and common field lots, is record evidence of title, conclusive between the government of the United States and the commissioners of public schools, and is good until some superior title is shown.
4. An entry made in 1836, by virtue of a pre-emption right, of one of these lots, is not such superior title, because such lands were appropriated and not subject to entry, and were beyond the control of the officers who allowed the entry.
5. Nor could the party who made the entry be heard to say he did not know that it was so appropriated. This could not make his entry valid.

THIS is a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Missouri, and the case is well stated in the opinion of the court.

It was argued by *Mr. Lawrence* and *Mr. Johnson*, for plaintiff in error, and by *Mr. Geyer*, for defendant in error.

\* *Mr. Justice CATRON* delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 21 ]

In this case, the school commissioners were plaintiffs in their corporate capacity, and, in order to eject the defendant below, were bound to produce a legal title to the land claimed. Their title depends on three acts of congress, passed in 1812, 1824, \*and 1831. The act of 1812 confirmed, to private owners [ \* 22 ] at St. Louis and other villages in Missouri, town lots, out-lots, and common field lots, in, adjoining, and belonging to the towns, and it also confirmed to the towns their commons.

This act made it the duty of the principal surveyor to survey, or cause to be surveyed and marked, (where the same had not

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already been done according to law,) the out-boundary lines of the said several towns and villages, so as to include the *out-lots*, common field lots, and commons thereto respectively belonging.

The second section provides, "that all town or village lots, out-lots, or common field lots, included in such surveys, which are not rightfully owned or claimed by any private individuals, or held as commons belonging to such towns or villages, or that the president of the United States may not think proper to reserve for military purposes, shall be, and the same are thereby, reserved for the support of schools in the respective towns and villages: *Provided*, the whole quantity of land contained in the lots reserved for the support of schools shall not exceed one-twentieth of the whole lands included in the general survey of any town or village."

The first section of the act of the 26th of May, 1824, requires the owners of lots which are confirmed by the act of the 13th of June, 1812, within eighteen months after the passage of the act, "to designate their said lots by proving, before the recorder of land titles, the fact of inhabitation, cultivation, or possession of their said lots, and the boundaries and extent of each claim, so as to enable the surveyor general to distinguish the private from the vacant lots appertaining to said towns and villages.

The second section of this act makes it the duty of the surveyor general, immediately after the expiration of the time allowed for private owners to prove the inhabitation, cultivation, and possession of their lots, "to proceed, under the instruction of the commissioner of the general land office, to survey, designate, and set apart to the said towns and villages, respectively, so many of the said vacant town or village lots, out-lots, and common field lots, for the support of schools in said towns and villages, respectively, as the president shall not, before that time; have reserved for military purposes, and not exceeding one-twentieth part of the whole lands included in the general survey of such town or village, according to the provision of the second section of the act of the 13th of June, 1812; and also to survey and designate, as soon after the passage of this act as may be, the commons belonging to the said towns and villages, according to their respective claims and confirmations under said act of congress, where the same has not already been done."

[ \* 23 ] \* By the third section of the act, the recorder of land titles is required to issue a certificate of confirmation for each (private) claim confirmed, "and, as soon as the said term (eighteen months) shall have expired, furnish the surveyor general with the list of lots proved to have been inhabited, cultivated, or

possessed, to serve as his guide in distinguishing them from the vacant lots to be set apart as above described, (for the use of schools,) and shall transmit a copy of such list to the commissioner of the general land office."

On the 27th of January, 1831, an act of congress was passed, for the purpose of transferring the title of the United States (if any) remaining in the property belonging to the several towns and villages embraced by the act of the 13th of June, 1812.

The first section relinquishes to the inhabitants of the several towns and villages all the right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the town and village lots, out-lots, and common field lots confirmed to them by the first section of the act of the 13th of June, 1812. The second section relinquishes all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the town and village lots, out-lots, and common field lots reserved for the support of schools, by the act of 1812, in the respective towns and villages, and provides that "the same shall be sold or disposed of, or regulated, for the said purpose, in such manner as may be directed by the legislature of the State of Missouri."

The defendants in error were incorporated by a public act of the legislature of Missouri, approved the 13th of February, 1833, entitled "An act to establish a corporation in the city of St. Louis, for the purpose of public education." By the ninth section of this act, the title, possession, charge, and control of all lands and lots in or near St. Louis, granted to the inhabitants for school purposes by any act of congress, is vested in the board of school commissioners, with power to dispose of and apply the same to the purpose of education.

At the trial, the (then) plaintiff gave in evidence the following documents,\* among others:

1. A plat called and known as map X, being certified by the surveyor general to be "a plat and description of the survey of the out-boundary lines of the town (now city) of St. Louis, in the Territory (now State) of Missouri, as it stood incorporated on the 13th of June, 1812, including the out-lots, common field lots, and commons thereto belonging, made in pursuance of the first section of the act of congress approved the 13th of June, 1812, entitled 'An act making further provision for settling the claims to land in the Territory of Missouri,' which was approved and certified by the surveyor general, December 8, 1840."

\* 2. A certificate of the surveyor general, in pursuance [ \* 24 ] of instructions of the commissioner of the general land office, as follows:

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*“Assignment and Survey, No. 367.”*

“Office of the surveyor of public lands in the States of Illinois and Missouri, St. Louis, June 15, 1843.”

“Under the instructions of the commissioner of the general land office, the piece of land, the survey of which is herein platted and described, has been legally surveyed, and under the instructions aforesaid it is hereby designated and set apart to the town (now city) of St. Louis, for the support of schools therein, in conformity with the second section of the act of congress, approved the 26th of May, 1824, entitled an act supplementary to an act passed on the 13th day of June, one thousand eight hundred and twelve, entitled ‘An act making further provisions for settling the claims to land in the Territory of Missouri;’ the said piece of land hereby designated and set apart as aforesaid is situated within the bounds of the survey directed to be made by the first section of the act of the 13th of June, 1812, aforesaid, so as to include the town lots, out-lots, common field lots and commons of the town of St. Louis; and is also within the limits of the said town of St. Louis, as it stood incorporated on the 13th day of June, 1812; and does not, together with all other land designated and set apart to the town of St. Louis for the support of schools, under the aforesaid second section of the act of congress of the 26th of May, 1824, amount to one twentieth of the whole lands included in the general survey directed to be made of said town of St. Louis, by the aforesaid first section of the act of congress of the 13th day of June, 1812; the said piece of land was not, so far as the records of the office show, rightfully owned or claimed by any private individual on the said 13th day of June, 1812; nor was it held as common belonging to the said town of Saint Louis; neither has it been reserved by the president of the United States for military purposes.”

Similar certificates are found in the record for other parcels of lands assigned to the use of schools, but not involved in controversy.

When Louisiana was acquired, the lands included in the out-boundary survey, comprising St. Louis, its fields and commons, were held by imperfect rights, the legal title being vested in the United States, as they had previously been in the government of Spain. As this government could not be sued in its own courts, nor coerced to perfect equitable claims and rights, claim-  
[ \* 25 ] \* ants had to rely on its justice; and as congress had the full and sole power by the constitution to dispose of the public lands, and to make needful rules and regulations for that purpose, it followed that those who sought titles must obtain them on the terms that congress might prescribe; and more especially

were the donations made by the act of 1812, to promote education, regulated by this rule.

By the act of 1812, the towns acquired the promise of, and an imperfect title to, certain vacant lands that might be found to exist within an out-boundary survey, but the government reserved to itself the power to make this survey, and the board of school directors was therefore compelled to remain passive until it was completed, and the private claims within it ascertained, and until the United States designated the school lands comprehended within it.

This survey was completed in 1840 by the surveyor general, and in 1843 he fulfilled the duty of designating the school lands, whereby they became vested in the authorities of Missouri. These proceedings exhausted the powers of the surveyor general under the acts we have quoted; and whatever controversies may now arise, in reference to these lands, must be subject to judicial cognizance. See *Elliott v. Piersol*, 1 Pet. 341.

Our opinion is, that the school lands were in the condition of Spanish claims after confirmation by the United States, without having established and conclusive boundaries made by public authority, and which claims depended for their specific identity on surveys to be executed by the government. The case of *West v. Cochran*, 17 How. 413, lays down the dividing line between the executive and judicial powers in such cases, to wit: That until a designation, accompanied by a survey or description, was made by the surveyor general, the title attached to no land, nor had a court of justice jurisdiction to ascertain its boundaries.

We are furthermore of opinion that the certificate of the surveyor general, above set forth, and which was accepted by the grantees, is record evidence of title, by the recitals in which the government and the board of school directors are mutually bound and concluded. And this instrument, declaring that the land prescribed was reserved for the support of schools, and the courts of justice having no power to revise the acts of the surveyor general under these statutes, as respects the school lands, it is not open to them to inquire whether the lands set apart were or were not lots of the description referred to in the statutes. The parties interested have agreed that this land was a school lot, and here the matter must rest, unless some third person can show a better title. And the plaintiff in error insists \* that he has shown a better one by the [ \* 26 ] production of Duncan's entry covering the land. It was allowed by the register and receiver at St. Louis, May 2, 1836, for the fractional section No. 26, by virtue of a pre-emption claim set up by Duncan.

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Of this land, the designated school lot claimed by the plaintiff below includes five acres and  $\frac{66}{100}$ ths of an acre.

The entry was contested, and was brought to the consideration of the commissioner of the general land office, and upon August 1, 1845, he instructed the register and receiver that only  $8\frac{20}{100}$  acres was vacant at that spot; the residue of the  $35\frac{49}{100}$  acres surveyed as fractional section 26, had been located on private claims; nor was there evidence that any part of the  $8\frac{66}{100}$  acres had been inhabited as required by the pre-emption laws. This inquiry, he remarks, was however unnecessary, because the  $8\frac{66}{100}$  acres had been reserved for the support of schools in the town of St. Louis by the act of 1812, and a selection of said land, for that purpose, having been made under the act, "it cannot, therefore, be subject to the operation of the subsequent pre-emption laws of 1814 and 1816."

He further declared: "In addition to the above objection, the said land is within the corporate limits of the city of St. Louis, as established in 1809, and, if not so reserved, would not have been subject to pre-emption subsequent to that time—the principle having been early settled in a pre-emption case for land within the limits of the town of Mobile, that the right of pre-emption, designated for the benefit of agriculturists, could not be regarded as applicable to residents within the bounds of an incorporated city or town." For the foregoing reasons, the entry of fractional section 26, for  $35\frac{49}{100}$  acres, was canceled, and the register and receiver were ordered to refund the purchase money.

On these facts, the circuit court gave to the jury the following charge:

"The court is asked to instruct you, that the claims of the respective parties to the land in controversy must depend mainly upon the question, whether the land was reserved for the use of schools by the act of the 13th of June, 1812. In this view the court concurs; but without advising you more at large upon that subject, as requested, gives the case the direction indicated by two of the propositions submitted, one on either side, designed to effect a comparison between the titles of the parties. These are as follows:

"On the part of the defendant, 'that the pre-emption to Robert Duncan conferred a valid claim under the pre-emption laws, and that he, having settled upon the land before any survey thereof was actually made, is entitled to hold it, and that the persons  
[ \* 27 ] \* deriving title from said Duncan have a title superior to the plaintiffs.'

"On the other hand, it is insisted 'that the title of the plaintiffs, under the act of the surveyor general, designating and setting apart



the ground in controversy to the plaintiffs, is superior to the title of the defendant, under an entry with the register and receiver of the land office; and of this opinion is the court. The jury is therefore instructed, that, upon the titles exhibited in testimony by the parties, the plaintiff is entitled to recover.

“The court adds, that the defendant has the right to impeach the title of the plaintiff, the same and to the same extent as if the entry of Duncan, under which he claims, had not been vacated by the commissioner of the general land office. And the court further instructs the jury, that no evidence has been adduced on the part of the defendant competent to invalidate or overthrow the plaintiff's title, and therefore the jury should find for the plaintiff.”

The conflicting titles both depend on acts of congress, and are submitted to this court on the whole record; and which we are called on to compare, as was done in the cases of *Matthews v. Zane*, 4 Cranch, 382; *Ross v. Barland*, 1 Pet. 664; and *Jackson v. Wilcox*, 13 Pet. 509. This follows from the instruction given, which maintains that the title of the board of public schools, under the certificate of the surveyor general, setting apart the land in dispute to the plaintiffs below, was superior to the defendants' title under Duncan's entry with the register and receiver; and that, therefore, the jury was directed to find for the plaintiff. This general instruction raises the question, whether the land was subject to sale, to one claiming a preference of entry under the pre-emption laws.

To which it may be answered, that when the act of 1812 dedicated certain lands for the purposes of education to the use of the village of St. Louis, and the act of 1831 vested the title to these lands in the city, such lands were appropriated, and not subject to sale; they were beyond the reach of the officers of the government, nor could their action lawfully extend to them, with the exception that they could be ascertained and designated within the power reserved. Nor could Duncan be heard to say that he did not know that this parcel of land was reserved. The same excuse might be made, and with a much greater claim to justice and propriety, by one who obtained an entry on land reserved from sale for military purposes, or for some other public use, by the president; the fact of which reservation was hardly known beyond the general and local land offices; yet such entries have constantly been set aside as absolutely void, or as \* voidable, by the de- [ \* 28 ] partment of public lands. The case of *Wilcox v. Jackson*, 13 Pet., was an instance of the first kind, where the entry was pronounced as absolutely void, it being in the notorious limits of a reservation for military purposes; and so here the entry of Duncan

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was within the notorious limits of the city of St. Louis, according to the record of incorporation made by the court of common pleas for St. Louis county, in 1809, and which city limits are recognized by the department of public lands and by the out-boundary survey, as the existing limits when the act of 1812 was passed. This appears from the documents offered in evidence, on which the instruction to the jury was founded. We, therefore, concur with the views expressed by the State courts and those of the commissioner of the general land office, that Duncan's entry was invalid.

As this concurrence with the State courts is conclusive of the controversy, we do not deem it necessary to examine further into the titles and instructions given to the jury.

It is proper to remark, that we are here dealing with the survey, (marked X,) and ascertaining its effect as regards the lands granted and allotted for school purposes, and are not to be understood as having expressed any opinion on the effect of this out-boundary survey on titles situated beyond it, and claimed to have been confirmed by the act of 1812, or which were subject to be identified by the recorder of land titles, under the act of 1824.

For the reasons above stated, it is ordered that the judgment of the supreme court of Missouri be affirmed.

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ISAAC HARTSHORN, Plaintiff in Error, v. HORACE H. DAY.

18 H. 28.

FILING THE RECORD IN TIME.

Where defendant in error files a copy of the record within the time allowed by the rule of the court, and plaintiff afterwards, but also within the time prescribed by the rule, files a copy, the case as docketed by plaintiff shall stand for hearing, and that of the defendant be dismissed.

THIS was a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Rhode Island.

The defendant in error, under his construction of rule 63 of the supreme court, the substance of which is correctly stated in the opinion, filed a transcript of the record, and docketed the case on the 24th November, 1855. The plaintiff in error did the same on the 1st day of December, both being before the commencement of the term next after the judgment was rendered in the circuit court.

*Mr. Gillett*, for the defendant, now moved for leave to withdraw the transcript filed by him, that he might have it printed at his own expense, without losing its place on the docket.



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\* Upon which motion, Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the [ \* 29 ] opinion of the court.

In the above case, a motion was made by the defendant that he be permitted to withdraw the record filed and docketed by him, and have it printed at his own expense, without losing its place on the docket.

Rule 63, published in 16 How. requires that, when an appeal on writ of error shall be taken to this court thirty days before the commencement of the ensuing term, the record shall be filed within the first six days of the term; and if the plaintiff in error or appellant shall fail to comply with this rule, the defendant in error or appellee may have the cause docketed and dismissed, upon producing a certificate of the clerk of the court wherein the judgment or decree was rendered, stating the cause, and certifying that such writ of error or appeal has been duly sued out and allowed.

But the rule states, the defendant in error or appellee may, at his option, docket the case and file a copy of the record with the clerk of the court; and if the case is docketed and a copy of the record filed with the clerk of this court, by either party, within the periods of time above limited and prescribed by this rule, the case shall stand for argument at the term.

The above case was docketed in this court, by the defendant in error, before the expiration of the time allowed the plaintiff to file the record.

The plaintiff in error filed the record and had the cause docketed, before the expiration of the six days after the commencement of the term; he was therefore within the rule, and was guilty of no laches. Had he failed to do this, the defendant, on the certificate of the clerk, might have docketed and dismissed the cause, or he might have procured the record and docketed the case, which, under the rule, would stand for argument at the present term. But the case cannot be dismissed or docketed by the defendant, unless the plaintiff in error or appellant shall be in default.

The above cause is, therefore, dismissed.

*Order.*

*Mr. Gillett*, of counsel for the defendant in error, having moved the court, on a prior day of the present term, for leave to withdraw this record in order to have the same printed forthwith, and it appearing to the court that this record was filed and docketed at the instance of the defendant in error, on the 24th \* day [ \* 30 ] of November last, and it also appearing that the plaintiff in error had filed the record and docketed the case, on the 1st of

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December last, within the period allowed him by the 63d rule of court, it is considered by the court that this cause was filed and docketed prematurely by the defendant in error, and should be dismissed—whereupon it is now here ordered by this court that this cause be stricken from the docket and that the record thereof be delivered to the defendant in error.

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UNITED STATES, Appellants, v. JOHN C. FREMONT.

18 H. 30.

PRACTICE ON APPEAL.

1. Where an appellant or plaintiff in error fails to file with the clerk a transcript of the record within the first six days of the term next after taking his appeal, the appellee is entitled to have the appeal docketed and dismissed under the rules of this court, on producing the certificate of the inferior court that such appeal had been taken.
2. No appeal lies from an order of the court below, which is nothing more than recording the mandate of this court in the same case, once heard here on appeal or writ of error, and such an appeal will be dismissed and a *procedendo* awarded.

On appeal from the district court for the northern district of California.

The case had been decided by this court on its merits, as reported in 17 How. 553, and the mandate sent to the district court and entered on its record as the decree of that court. From this decree the United States took an appeal, but failed to file the transcript within the first six days of the present term, as required by rule 63 of the court. See *Hartshorn v. Day*, the next preceding case.

The appellee, Fremont, now moves to dismiss the case on two grounds, namely:

1. That no appeal lies from an order of the court below, which is only an entry of the mandate of this court.
2. That appellants have failed to file the record and docket the case within the first six days of the term, as required by rule.

And he further asks for a *procedendo* to issue forthwith on the dismissal to the district court.

[ \* 36 ] \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from the northern district of California.

A final decree was entered in this case at the last term, and a mandate was issued to the district court, directing such further proceedings in conformity to the opinion and decree of this court, as according to right and justice, and the laws of the United States, ought to be had.

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This court reversed the decision of the district court, and ordered, adjudged, and decreed, that the claim of the said John C. Fremont, to the land as described, and set forth in the record, is a good and valid claim; and that the said claim be, and the same is hereby confirmed to the extent of ten square leagues, the quantity specified in the original grant, set forth in the record and within the limits therein mentioned, the said land to be surveyed in the form and divisions prescribed by law for surveys in California, and in one entire tract.

The mandate was filed in the district court, and the counsel of Fremont moved the court for an order, in pursuance of said mandate, in the form of the decree in that behalf elsewhere in the record of the case appearing, excepting the following words, "the said land to be surveyed in the form and divisions prescribed by law, for surveys in California, and in one entire tract," which motion was opposed by the district attorney of the United States. The district court entered the decree upon its record, refusing to omit the words, moved by the appellee, and to this refusal his counsel excepted.

No further proceedings were had, as appears from the record; and at a subsequent day of the district court, the attorney of the United States applied for an appeal in open court, in behalf of the United States, from the final decision of that court, at the above term, which was granted.

The appeal was allowed the 23d of July, 1855, more than three months before the commencement of the present term of this court; and no record of the case having been filed within six days after the commencement of the term, as the rule requires, a record of the case being filed by the appellee, a motion is made to dismiss the appeal on the ground that there was no action of the district court on which an appeal could be taken. And also, on the ground that the appellants have failed to file the record within the rule.

It was the duty of the appellants to file the record and docket the cause, within the first six days of the present term; the decree appealed from having been entered sixty days before the commencement of the present term. With the exception of California, Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, and Utah, appeals or writs of error allowed are required to be docketed within the \*first six days of the term, if entered or allowed, thirty [ \* 37 ] days before its commencement.

The appellants having failed to file the record, it was filed by the appellee, which entitles him, under the rule, to have the cause dismissed.

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United States v. Fremont.

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But the counsel for the appellee insist that the appeal should be dismissed, on the ground that it was taken with the intent to bring before this court a review of its decree entered at the last term. As there was no action by the district court, except the entry of the mandate upon its records, the appeal brings before us only that which was transmitted to the district court by the mandate. This is an irregular procedure; and it must have been entered without a particular examination by the court.

The appeal is dismissed, and the clerk is directed, forthwith, to certify this decision to the district court.

Mr. Justice CATRON. I agree that, by the 19th, 30th, 43d, and 63d rules governing the practice of this court, the record presented was not filed in time, and that therefore the appeal must be dismissed for want of prosecution. But I do not concur that, on the present motion to dismiss, we ought to decide the question, whether the district court could or could not allow the appeal on the decree made there, on the ground that the decree did not conform to the mandate of this court.

The motion to dismiss for want of prosecution, and the motion to dismiss for want of jurisdiction, to entertain the appeal, are different and distinct in their character; the one only dismisses the appeal and allows a second; and the other bars it.

The practice has been, when the record was not filed in time, for the defendant in error, or appellee, to produce a certificate from the clerk, or a copy of the record duly certified, showing that the writ of error or appeal had been taken, and that it operated as a *supersedeas*, when the cause was docketed and dismissed. But when a motion was made to dismiss the cause for want of jurisdiction in this court to entertain the writ of error or appeal; or in other words, want of authority in the court below to allow it, (which is the question here,) then the record was ordered to be printed, briefs filed, and the question discussed in the usual way. Nor has it ever occurred in my experience in this court, to set down a cause to be heard at the same time, on both motions. The consequence must be in such a proceeding, that if the plaintiff in error is turned out of court for his neglect, in not filing the record in time, he has no power to move for a *certiorari* to [ \* 38 ] amend the record, filed by the other \*side, and then this court bars a second appeal by further adjudging that no jurisdiction existed in the inferior court to allow it. And such is the judgment in this case.

Some of the most stringent controversies that have come before

us have arisen on motions to dismiss for want of jurisdiction, and especially in causes brought here from state courts under the 25th section of the judiciary act.

The idea in such cases, that a State court decision should in effect, be affirmed, and the plaintiff in error barred, by dismissing case for want of jurisdiction, on the presentment of a manuscript record, without furnishing the court with even a brief (as was done here) is not only contrary to our established practice, but is calculated to do great mischief to suitors.

In the instance before us, I never saw the papers until after I heard the opinion of the majority of the court read. I deemed it unimportant, on the first question, to read the record, as it had not been filed in time, nor was a valid excuse offered for the delay. On the second question, I had then formed no opinion. In his remarks, the attorney general referred us to a letter of the district attorney of the United States for the northern district of California, which was officially written to the secretary of the interior, and presented to us, as part of the attorney general's argument, setting forth the reasons why the appeal was prosecuted. These reasons, in substance, are, that this court, in its opinion delivered by the chief justice at the last term, (17 How. 565,) remanded the cause, and directed the court below to enter a decree conformably to that opinion; which opinion (*ibid.* 558) declared: "That if any other person within the limits where the quantity granted to Alvarado should be located, had afterwards obtained a grant by specific boundaries before Alvarado had made his survey, the title of the latter grantee could not be impaired by any subsequent survey for Alvarado; and that as between individual claimants from the government, the title of the party who had obtained a grant for the specific land would be the superior and better one."

And it is insisted, in this argument, that the district court should have inserted in its decree the foregoing conclusions, and have protected individual titles and rights, in the region of country where Colonel Fremont's claim might be located, ordering that such lands should be excluded from the survey as Fremont's land, although they were embraced within its out-boundaries. And, secondly, that, in the opinion of this court, the district court was directed to cause the grant to Alvarado to be surveyed, "in the form and divisions prescribed by law for surveys in California." But that it had made no decree as to the form of the survey, and disregarded the instruction, leaving \*it to the [ \* 39 ] surveyor to ascertain the law, and to locate the land, according to the law of California, whether it was Mexican or

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United States v. Fremont.

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United States law; whereas, it is insisted that the true construction of the grant to Alvarado, (as to the manner in which it shall be surveyed,) was a judicial question; and that, as the concession was for the purposes of cultivation and pasturage, a survey should be made of lands suited to these purposes, and that the district court ought so to have adjudged and decreed, and to have excluded a survey of barren mountains, including improved gold mines, contrary to the plain intention of the parties to the grant as originally made.

The questions presented were supposed to be of grave importance and much difficulty, and, therefore, no imputation of unfair and oppressive conduct should be cast on the officer of the government who prayed this appeal, under the express sanction of the district court.

It is manifest that Fremont, the appellee, believed he might appeal, if he saw proper to do so. He took a bill of exceptions, and had it signed by the court, to its ruling, that his claim should be surveyed in one tract. As no bill of exceptions lies, in cases of this description, an appeal could have been prosecuted, on the affirmative fact, that too much had been inserted in the decree, contrary to the mandate of this court; so, on the other hand, if not enough was put into the decree to execute the mandate, an appeal would equally lie. As a general rule, this is undoubted. It is plainly apparent that both parties, and the court, believed that an appeal would lie.

I hold it to be true, however, that the appeal should not have been allowed. By the treaty of peace with Mexico, the legal title to the public lands in California was vested in the United States, onerated with private claims to parts thereof. Alvarado's claim was presented as one of this character, and being brought before this court, was pronounced to be a good and subsisting claim; and furthermore, that all the conditions it contained were subsequent conditions, which, by the treaty, ceased to have any binding force; and, therefore, they were struck from the grant as being no necessary part thereof. It was also held, that the claim, in this condition, was assignable, and properly assigned to Colonel Fremont; and, as there was no grant to any specific tract of land, that Colonel Fremont held a common interest in the public lands generally, lying within a large section of country described in the grant.

This decision reduced the claim to the condition of a mere floating land warrant, that could not be located by judicial authority, more than an ordinary floating warrant can be located by the de-  
[ \* 40 ] cree of a court; and, therefore, when seeking location, \* it



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Sturges v. Harrold.

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must, of necessity, address itself to the executive or legislative power.

The district court, having entered the decree as directed, had no jurisdiction to take any further step in the cause. It follows that the executive department must determine for itself whether any law exists authorizing that branch of the government to ascertain and survey the land, and issue a patent for it, by which the title of the United States will be divested, and transferred to the grantee.

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LATHROP L. STURGESS v. CHRISTIAN HARROLD.

GEORGE BUCKLEY v. THE SAME.

18 H. 40.

PRACTICE ON WRIT OF ERROR.

The fact that the clerk of the circuit court had other duties to perform, which kept him from making out the transcript of the record, will not be received as a ground to extend the time within which the rule of this court requires plaintiff to file such a transcript here.

JUDGMENTS in these cases were rendered in the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana on the 16th and 21st days of November, 1855, returnable to the present term of the court. The clerk of that court certifies that he could not, consistently with the other duties of his office, make out and have ready the transcripts of the cases within less than ninety days after the commencement of this term.

On this certificate *Mr. Lawrence* asked for an extension of the time allowed by the rules for filing the transcripts in this court.

\* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 41 ]

In the above cases writs of error were allowed on the 21st day of November last, the judgments having been entered on the 16th of that month. The clerk of the circuit court certifies that he cannot, consistently with the other duties of his office, make out and have ready the transcript of the record and proceedings in the said causes, in time for the same to reach Washington city at the opening of the term of the supreme court, nor within less than ninety days thereafter.

On this statement of the clerk, a motion is made for longer time to certify the record.

At the December term, 1853, this court adopted a rule requiring, where a judgment or decree was entered thirty days before the succeeding term of this court, that the writ of error or appeal should

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Peck v. Sanderson.

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be entered on the record of this court, and the record filed within the first six days of the term. But if less than thirty days intervene between the entry of the judgment or decree and the sitting of this court, the case should be entered on the docket of this court, and the record filed, within thirty days from the commencement of the term.

The above rule was adopted to prevent unnecessary and improper delays, in prosecuting writs of error or appeals in this court from the inferior courts. Thirty days from the commencement of this term affords ample time to the clerk to make out and forward the records in the above cases. The rules of this court can, in no respect, depend upon the convenience of the clerks of the inferior courts.

Extension denied, and motion overruled.

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JAMES B. PECK *et al.*, Appellants, v. JOHN SANDERSON.

18 H. 42.

PRACTICE AS TO REHEARING.

The Supreme Court refuses a motion for rehearing a cause on the ground that the mandate had remitted the case to the court below.

THIS case was argued and decided at the last term of the court, and is reported in 17 Howard.

An affidavit was filed, stating that counsel for appellee was prevented by sickness from attending the court and arguing the cause at the time it was heard.

On this ground *Mr. Rush* moved for a reargument.

*Mr. Wahr* opposed the motion.

Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This case was decided at the last term, on an appeal from the circuit court of the United States for the eastern district of Pennsylvania, and a motion is now made by *Mr. Rush*, counsel for the appellee, for a reargument, on the ground that he was prevented by sickness from attending the court at the time of the hearing.

It is a subject of regret that any cause should be heard in the absence of counsel, and especially where the cause of absence, by a failure in the mail, was unknown to the court.

In the above case, the brief of the counsel was before the court, and it is not probable that an oral argument would have changed the result.



## Barnard's Heirs v. Ashley's Heirs.

But in the case of *Browder v. McArthur*, 7 Wheat. 58, it was held that this court cannot grant a rehearing in a case which has been remitted to the court below; and in the case of the *Washington Bridge Company v. Stewart et al.*, 3 How. 413, the same principle was recognized. The motion is overruled.

Is not the true ground of refusing a rehearing the fact that the application was made after the close of the term, and cannot the court order a return of the mandate at any time during the term in which the judgment was rendered? M.

## BARNARD'S HEIRS v. ASHLEY'S HEIRS AND CRAIG'S REPRESENTATIVES.

18h	43
L-ed	285
38f	9

18 H. 43.

1. Both parties claiming under patents from the United States, a court of chancery will inquire into the equities on which the patents were founded.
2. The decisions of the registers and receivers of the land office are not conclusive since the act of Congress of July 4, 1836, which gives the commissioner of the general land office supervision over their acts. *Wilcox v. Jackson*, 13 Pet. 511, and *Lytle v. Arkansas*, 9 How. 333, commented on. *Johnson v. Towsley*, 13 Wall. 72; *Samson v. Smiley*, 13 Wall. 91.
3. The governor of Arkansas having, under an act of congress authorizing him to select lands for the erection of public buildings in that State, selected them as soon as they were surveyed, they were not, after such selection, open to pre-emption under a law passed after the selection was made.
4. After the surveys were finally completed, they were open to pre-emption, if the pre-emptor had possession, such as the pre-emption law required, prior to its passage, unless a valid selection had been previously made under the act first mentioned.
5. The questions of fact concerning such actual possession in this case considered, and the opinion of the circuit court affirmed on the doubtful state of the evidence.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the southern district of New York.

The case is fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Pike*, for appellants.

*Mr. Lawrence* and *Mr. Crittenden*, for appellees.

Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court.

The proceedings in the court below consisted of a bill filed by Barnard against Ashley and Craig, praying that certain patents for lands issued to the defendants might be decreed to be canceled, upon the ground of a violation of pre-emption rights on part of the complainant, to the following tracts, namely: N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  and S. W. fr.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec. 27; S. E. fr.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec. 28, T. 18 S., R. 1 W.; S. W. fr.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec. 15, T. 19 S., R. 1 W.; S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec. 22, T. 18 S.,

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Barnard's Heirs v. Ashley's Heirs.

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R. 1 W.; and a cross-bill on part of Ashley to be quieted in his title to the S. E. qr. of sec. 22, against the right set up [ \* 44 ] by Barnard to that tract, under a junior \* patent therefor, upon the ground that Barnard had no right to this tract, and that the patent was issued to him improperly.

The title of Ashley and Craig (the appellees) to the first four tracts is derived from a sale to them of the land in controversy by the governor of Arkansas, in consequence of a selection made by him of the land under certain provisions of the acts of congress of the 2d of March, 1831, and the 4th of July, 1832, (4 Stats. at Large, 473, 563,) upon which selection and sale patents were issued by the United States. The title to the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec. 22, T. 18 S., R. 1 W., is derived from the location of what is called a "Lovely donation claim" on this quarter section, by virtue of the provisions of the 8th section of the acts of the 24th of May, 1828, (4 Stats. at Large, 306,) and 6th of January, 1829, (ibid. 329.)

According to the conceded facts, it is insisted on the part of Ashley and Craig, that the register and receiver having, on due proof and examination, rejected Barnard's claims to a preference of entry of the four quarter sections, he is thereby concluded from setting them up in a court of equity, because the register and receiver acted in a judicial capacity, and their judgment, being subject to no appeal, is conclusive of the claim. And the cases of *Jackson v. Wilcox*, and *Lytle v. The State of Arkansas* are relied on to maintain this position.

In cases arising under the pre-emption laws of the 29th of May, 1830, and of the 19th of June, 1834, the power of ascertaining and deciding on the facts which entitled a party to the right of pre-emption was vested in the register and receiver of the land district in which the land was situated, from whose decision there was no direct appeal to higher authority. But, even under these laws, the proof on which the claim was to rest was to be made "agreeably to the rules to be prescribed by the commissioner of the general land office;" and, if not so made, the entry would be suspended, when the proceeding was brought before the commissioner by an opposing claimant. In cases, however, like the one before us, where an entry had been allowed on *ex parte* affidavits, which were impeached, and the land claimed by another, founded on an opposing entry, the course pursued at the general land office was to return the proofs and allegations, in opposition to the entry, to the district office, with instructions to call all the parties before the register and receiver, with a view of instituting an inquiry into the matters charged; allowing each party, on due notice, an opportunity

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of cross-examining the witnesses of the other, each being allowed to introduce proofs; and, on the close of the investigation, the register and receiver were instructed to report the proceeding to the general land office, with their opinion as to the effect of the proof \* and the case made by the additional testimony. [ \* 45 ] And, on this return, the commissioner does in fact exercise a supervision over the acts of the register and receiver. This power of revision is exercised by virtue of the act of July 4, 1836, § 1, which provides "that from and after the passage of this act, the executive duties now prescribed, or which may hereafter be prescribed by law, appertaining to the surveying and sale of the public lands of the United States, or in anywise respecting such public lands; and also such as relate to private claims of land, and the issuing of patents for all grants of land under the authority of the government of the United States, shall be subject to the supervision and control of the commissioner of the general land office, under the direction of the president of the United States." The necessity of "supervision and control," vested in the commissioner, acting under the direction of the president, is too manifest to require comment, further than to say that the facts found in this record show that nothing is more easily done than apparently to establish, by *ex parte* affidavits, cultivation and possession of particular quarter sections of land, when the fact is untrue. That the act of 1836 modifies the powers of registers and receivers to the extent of the commissioner's action in the instances before us, we hold to be true. But if the construction of the act of 1836, to this effect, were doubtful, the practice under it for nearly twenty years could not be disturbed without manifest impropriety.

The case relied on, of *Wilcox v. Jackson*, 13 Pet. 511, was an ejectment suit, commenced in February, 1836; and as to the acts of the register and receiver, in allowing the entry in that case, the commissioner had no power of supervision, such as was given to him by the act of July 4, 1836, after the cause was in court.

In the next case, 9 How. 333, all the controverted facts on which both sides relied had transpired, and were concluded before the act of July 4, 1836, was passed; and therefore its construction, as regards the commissioner's powers, under the act of 1836, was not involved. Whereas, in the case under consideration, the additional proceedings were had before the register and receiver in 1837, and were subject to the new powers conferred on the commissioner.

In *Lytle's case*, we declared that the occupant was wrongfully deprived of his lawful right of entry, under the pre-emption laws, and the title set up under the selection of the governor of Arkansas

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was decreed to Cloyes, the claimant, this court holding his claim to the land to have been a legal right, by virtue of the occupancy and cultivation, subject to be defeated only by a failure to perform the conditions of making proof and tendering the [ \* 46 ] \* purchase money. There the facts were examined to ascertain which party had the better right ; and, following out that precedent, we must do so here.

Governor Pope was authorized to select lands equal to ten sections in the Territory of Arkansas, in tracts not less than a quarter section each, and to sell the same for the purpose of raising a fund to erect public buildings in the Territory. The three first named quarter sections lie in township 18, the survey of which was made and returned to the local land office, and approved June 4, 1834, when the lands therein were subject to entry by the governor.

He made his final amended selections of the three tracts in township 18, June 6, 1834. The bill claims title to these tracts under the occupant law of June 19, 1834. As Governor Pope's assignees, Craig and Ashley had a vested right when the act of June 19 was passed ; it did not operate on these lands, which were appropriated to the use of the United States ; and patents for them were properly awarded to the purchasers from the governor.

The condition of the S. W. quarter of sec. 15, T. 19, differs from the preceding lands in this : the township survey of No. 19 was found to be inaccurate when first returned to the land office at Little Rock, and a resurvey was ordered as to some of the section lines, which were not finally adjusted till the 19th of July, 1834.

Governor Pope had selected the S. W. quarter of sec. 15 on the 29th of May preceding, relying on the inaccurate survey ; and it is insisted for Barnard's heirs, that the selection was invalid, as it could not be made of unsurveyed lands ; and that township No. 19 could not be legally recognized as surveyed, until the survey was settled and adopted by the surveyor general of the district.

Our opinion is, that the selection could only take effect from the 19th of July, 1834, when the township survey was sanctioned, and became a record in the district land office. As the occupant law passed June 19, 1834, Barnard's assignor, Richmond, could lawfully enter the quarter section, if he had occupied the same as required by law ; that is to say, if he was in possession when the act was passed, and cultivated any part of the land in the year 1833.

The bill alleges that Richmond occupied the quarter section June 19, 1834 ; that he had cultivated the same in 1833, and made due proof of his right of pre-emption.

It is further alleged, that on the 20th day of January, 1834, some

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five months before the occupant law was passed, Barnard purchased from Richmond the quarter section in dispute, and \*took his title bond for a conveyance when Richmond [ \* 47 ] should obtain a patent for the land; and by force of this bond the bill prays to have the patent to Craig and Ashley adjudged to have been for Barnard's benefit, and that the land be decreed to Barnard's heirs.

The act of 1834 revived the act of 29th of May, 1830, "to grant pre-emption rights to settlers." That act provides, (§ 3,) "that all assignments and transfers of rights of pre-emption given by this act, prior to the issuing of patents, shall be null and void."

The act of January 23, 1832, allowed a transfer of the certificate of purchase. Here, however, the assignment was made in January, 1834, when no law allowing of a preference of entry existed; but, as no reliance seems to have been placed in the pleadings on this ground of defense, we will not rest our decree on it.

As respects Richmond's occupation according to the act of 1834, John Monholland, Edward Doughty, and Daniel Kuger each swear, in similar language, "that Richmond, in the year 1833, cultivated part of the S. W. fractional quarter, sec. 15, in T. 19 S., R. 1 W. of the principal meridian, and raised a corn crop on the same in that year, (1833,) and was in possession of the same on the 19th day of June, 1834." Kuger says Richmond had his dwelling-house on the quarter section, and resided there on the 19th of June, 1834.

Jacob Silor, examined on part of the respondents, Ashley and Craig, states that he resided on Grand Lake, quite near the quarter section in dispute, since 1830. He says: "In February, 1833, when I arrived on the aforesaid lake, there was a turnip patch on the southwest fractional quarter of fractional section 15, in township 19 south, of range 1 west, claimed by one Edward Doughty, which I believe he abandoned in consequence of the location of the ten section claim on the land. After Doughty left the aforesaid fractional quarter, William Richmond, in December, 1833, built a cabin where the turnip patch claimed by the said Edward Doughty was made, and planted some eschallots. The aforesaid William Richmond lived in the same township, on the Mississippi river, on the lands owned by Mr. Cummins or Mr. Shaw, on the 19th of June, 1834; and never did live on section 15, from the time I went on the lake to the present day."

Benjamin Taylor deposes, that he settled with his negroes on township 18, in February, 1834; that in the spring of that year he examined with care the several tracts of land of Ashley and

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Craig, with a view to purchase them; and, being asked what the situation of the southwest quarter of section 15 was, when [ \* 48 ] \* he examined it, answers, that "there was a small burn of cane, perhaps twenty yards square, uninclosed, without the appearance of ever having been cultivated, and no house was thereon." We suppose that it had been burnt up by fire in the woods, or removed during the winter of 1833-1834.

We hold the truth to be, that Richmond built a cabin in 1833, and in January, 1834, sold out his improvements to Barnard and removed away, and resided elsewhere in June, 1834, and consequently was not entitled to a preference of entry.

The next subject of controversy is the S. E. qr. of sec. 22, T. 18. Ashley, by cross-bill, prayed to have his title quieted to this quarter section against Barnard's heirs, and the circuit court granted him the relief he asked.

The half of section 22 was entered by Ashley on a floating warrant, known as a Lovely claim. By the act of January 6, 1829, no one was permitted to enter the improvement of an actual settler in the Territory, by virtue of such floating warrant; and it is alleged that Barnard was such an actual settler, and had an improvement on the S. E. qr. sec. 22, T. 18, before Ashley entered it.

The cross-bill alleges that Barnard had improvements on sec. 23, but that they did not extend to the S. E. qr. of sec. 22 previous to the 4th of June, 1834, when Ashley entered the land. It was shortly before that time that Martin had corrected the eastern boundary of sec. 22, locating it about one hundred yards further west, and which was adopted as the true line at the land office. In support of the bill, Benjamin Taylor deposes, as already stated, that he removed to the immediate neighborhood of the lands in dispute in February, 1834, when he examined the half sec. 22, with a view to purchase it from Ashley. He states that Thomas Barnard cultivated the S. W. qr. of fractional sec. 23, in 1834; but that his cultivation and improvement did not extend to the south half of sec. 22, nor had any other person residence or cultivation thereon.

Philip Booth states that Barnard showed him (Booth) an improvement on the S. E. qr. of sec. 22 early in 1834; thinks it was an extension of his farm of two or three acres. It had been cleared the year before, but there was no cultivation. The witness does not recollect whether the clearing extended beyond the old line or the new one.

Silas Craig, who was a competent witness for Ashley in this separate proceeding, deposes that he was with Martin, the surveyor,



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Barnard's Heirs v. Ashley's Heirs.

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when the lines were run and adjusted, late in February, 1834; that the new and proper line bounding the section east is about one hundred yards west of the first line, which was rejected by the surveyor general; that when he was at the southeast corner of the section, he examined Barnard's improvement, [ \* 49 ] and ascertained that it did not extend west to the new line at any place. He seems to have made it his business to see if the improvement of Barnard extended to the S. E. qr. in dispute.

Romulus Payne was called on to prove the value of mesne profits and improvements; he says that Barnard commenced the cultivation on the S. E. qr. of sec. 22 in 1837.

John Monholland, Edward Doughty, and several other witnesses, swear on behalf of the defendants to the cross-bill, in general terms, that Barnard had possession of the S. E. qr. sec. 22, on the 19th of June, 1834, and that he had an improvement on part of it in 1833.

Barnard, in proving up his pre-emption right, swore that he was cultivating the quarter section in 1833, and in possession on the 19th June, 1834. And this affidavit is indorsed by two witnesses, Harrison and Butler, who merely say that they have heard Barnard's affidavit read, and that it is true.

So, likewise, Jacob Silor indorsed William Richmond's affidavit, made before a justice of the peace, and intended to secure a preference of entry for Barnard in Richmond's name, and which was declared sufficient by the register and receiver; and yet, when Silor was re-examined as a witness in this cause, he conclusively proved that Richmond left the land, and resided elsewhere when the occupant law of June 19, 1834, was passed.

The *ex parte* affidavits of Butler and Harrison, and those of Monholland and Doughty, were obviously written out for them to swear to as matter of form, but made with so little knowledge, on part of the witnesses, of the section lines, and the number of quarter sections on which they deposed improvements existed in 1833 and 1834, as to be of little value. And the same may be safely said of other witnesses whose affidavits were taken without cross-examination.

It is most obvious that these loose affidavits obtained by the interested party have been made, as to the improvement being on the quarter section claimed, on the information of him who sought the preference of entry; the witnesses not knowing, of their own knowledge, where the true section line was, over which they swear Barnard's improvement extended in the year 1833.

When the last examination was had before the register and re-

Wright v. Mattison.

ceiver in 1837, Barnard's own witnesses, Philip Booth and John F. Harrison, swore the facts to be, that Barnard had "deadened the timber and cleared away the cane," on a part of S. E. qr. sec. 22; that he fenced it early in 1834, and made a crop of corn on it that year, and was in possession June 19, 1834. Booth, in a subsequent affidavit, contradicts his first statement. That there [ \* 50 ] was no cultivation on the quarter section in 1833, \* we think is satisfactorily established; nor had Barnard any right to enter it. And such was the final opinion of the register and receiver, which the commissioner of the general land office reversed, and ordered a patent to issue to Barnard.

The circuit court were obviously of opinion, as appears from the decree it made, that Craig and Taylor's evidence established the fact that Barnard had no part of the quarter section in possession in 1833 or 1834, and hence decreed for the complainants in the cross-bill. And, in the doubtful state of the evidence, we are not prepared to say that this court can hold otherwise, and, therefore, affirm the decree, and order the cause to be remanded for further proceedings, as respects the profits and improvements.

JOEL WRIGHT, Plaintiff in Error, v. SCHUYLER H. MATTISON.

18 II. 50.

COLOR OF TITLE—TAX TITLE—POSSESSION.

1. What is color of title is matter of law to be decided by the court. What is good faith in making claim under such title is a matter of fact for the jury.
2. A tax title not fatally defective on its face may be color of title, to be determined by the court in connection with the facts.
3. It is not a necessary inference of law that a person in possession of land, claiming title, who permits it to be sold for taxes, cannot acquire, in good faith, a color of title by purchasing at such sale. The title may be sufficient to give color, and the jury must be left to decide on the good faith of the transaction.
4. The limitation acts of 1835 and 1839, of the State of Illinois, considered.

THE case is a writ of error to the circuit court for the northern district of Illinois, and is very fully stated in the opinion of the court, including the sections of the statutes verbatim.

*Mr. Browning*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Williams*, for defendant.

[ \* 52 ] \* Mr. Justice DANIEL delivered the opinion of the court. The questions determined by the circuit court, whose

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decision we are called on to review, arose upon the construction of two statutes of the State of Illinois, which limit the right of action against the possessors of lands, held by purchasers in virtue of sales and conveyances under the authority of the State, for the non-payment of taxes.

The provisions of the statutes in question are as follow:

January 17, 1835. Sect. 1. "That, hereafter, no person who now has, or hereafter may have, any right of entry into any lands of which any person may be possessed by actual residence thereon, having a connected title in law or equity, deducible of record from this State or the United States, or from any public officer authorized by the laws of the State to sell such lands for the non-payment of taxes, or from any sheriff, marshal, or other person authorized to sell such lands on execution, or under any order, judgment, or decree of any court of record, shall make any entry therein except within seven years from the time of such possession being taken; but when the possessor shall acquire such title after taking such possession, the limitation shall begin to run from the time of acquiring title."

By the statute of 1839 it is enacted, "That, hereafter, every person in the actual possession of lands or tenements, under claim and color of title made in good faith, and who shall, for seven successive years after the passage of this act, continue in such possession, and shall also during the said time pay all the taxes legally assessed on such lands or tenements, shall be held and adjudged to be the legal owner of said lands or tenements, to the extent and according to the purport of his or her paper title. All persons holding under such possession, by purchase, devise, or descent, before said seven years shall have expired, and shall continue such possession, and continue to pay the taxes as aforesaid, so as to complete the possession and payment of the taxes for the term aforesaid, shall be entitled to the benefit of this section."

In this case in the circuit court, which was an action of ejectment, the plaintiff's lessee, the defendant in error here, exhibited in proof a release from the widow of the patentee from the United States, of the premises in question; also deeds of conveyance from the heirs of the patentee, with the exception of one of those heirs, who was a minor, and whose estate or interest in the premises there seems to have been no attempt to transfer. \* The lessee [ \* 53 ] of the plaintiff further proved the possession of the premises by the defendant at the commencement of the action on the 15th of July, 1851.

The defendant, to maintain the issue on his part, offered to read

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in evidence to the jury a deed of the 20th of December, 1823, from the auditor of public accounts of the State of Illinois, to Nathaniel Wright and Joel Wright, for the land in controversy, reciting the public sale of those lands by the auditor, in pursuance of the several acts of the general assembly of the State, and of the act entitled, "An act for levying and collecting a tax on land and other property, approved February 18, 1823," and the bidding off the said lands to Nathaniel Wright and Joel Wright, as the best bidders, for the sum of eleven dollars and six cents, being the tax and costs due thereon for the years 1821 and 1822.

In connection with the foregoing deed from the auditor, the defendant offered to read in evidence to the jury a deed, properly executed and recorded, from the said Nathaniel Wright to the defendant, Joel Wright, for the northeast quarter of section thirty-four, (the premises claimed;) and offered further to prove to the jury, that the said defendant had been in the actual possession of the premises for more than seven years next preceding the commencement of this suit, and had paid all the taxes assessed thereupon; and the defendant stated by his counsel, that the purpose of offering the evidence was to secure to the defendant the benefit and protection of the seven years' limitation laws of 1835 and 1839.

To the introduction of this evidence by the defendant, the plaintiff objected, assigning for his objection the following causes:

1. That the defendant had neither proved, nor offered to prove, that the requisitions of the revenue law of 1823 had been complied with, prior to the sale of said land for taxes as stated in the auditor's deed, and that the deed was not *prima facie* evidence of these facts.

2. That said deed was void upon its face.

The court excluded the evidence thus tendered by the defendant, who excepted to the opinion of the court.

The defendant next offered in evidence a deed from the auditor of public accounts to the defendant, dated on the 10th day of January, 1833, in which it is stated, that in conformity with all the requisitions of the several laws in such cases made and provided, the auditor had, on the 11th day of January, 1831, exposed to sale a certain tract of land, being the northeast quarter of section thirty-four, in township seven north, in range four east of the [ \* 54 ] fourth principal meridian, for the sum of \* one dollar and eighty-two cents, being the amount of the tax for the year 1830, with the interest and costs chargeable on the said lands; and that the said Joel Wright had offered to pay the aforesaid sum for

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the whole of the said land; and the said Wright having paid the said sum into the treasury of the State, the auditor thereby granted and conveyed to the said Wright the whole of the northeast quarter of section thirty-four as above described, (being the land in controversy,) subject to the right of redemption, as provided by law.

This last mentioned deed from the auditor was admitted in evidence without objection, and as well as the former deed from the auditor to Nathaniel and Joel Wright, bearing date on the 20th of December, 1823, was shown to have been regularly recorded in the proper recording office.

By a statement of facts agreed between the counsel, it was in proof on the trial, that Joel Wright, claiming that he and his brother, Nathaniel, were owners and tenants in common in fee-simple of the land in controversy, took possession of it in 1829, by inclosing and putting under actual cultivation a portion thereof, and that, from time to time, he had extended his inclosures, until, in 1841, he had all the said quarter section under actual cultivation, with the exception of about twenty acres; and that, from the date last mentioned forward, he had continued in actual possession and cultivation of the said land; and had paid all the taxes assessed upon the said land from the year 1840 to 1851, inclusive of both years, and that the land was of the value of more than three thousand dollars.

The evidence having been closed on the part of the plaintiff, and on that of the defendant, the plaintiff moved the court for the following instructions to the jury, namely:

“That the deed offered in evidence by the defendant, of the 10th of January, 1833, from the auditor to the defendant, is of itself such a title as will protect a party in the possession of land under the act of 1839, provided it is made in good faith, and connected with the payment of taxes for seven successive years, and a continued possession for that time; but if the jury believe from the evidence that the defendant was in possession of the land in controversy, claiming to be the owner in fee, in the year 1829, and so continued to remain in possession until the year 1833, then he could acquire no title by permitting the land to be sold for taxes, and becoming the purchaser thereof in 1831; and the auditor's deed to the defendant on the sale of 1831 for the taxes of 1830, given in evidence by the defendant, conveys no title, and is not a title obtained in good faith; and such a deed, if obtained in the manner aforesaid, is not such a \* title as brings his pos- [ \* 55 ] session within the protection of the limitation acts of 1835 and 1839.

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This last instruction having been given as prayed by the plaintiff, was excepted to by the defendant.

After the closing of the testimony, there were on the part of the defendant, five several instructions prayed of the court. Of these, the first two having been granted, and no exception to them having been reserved, they are therefore not properly subjects for comment here.

The third one of these instructions being deemed unimportant, under the view which we take of this cause, will be dismissed without particular remark.

The fifth instruction prayed for by the defendant below, the materiality of which will hereafter be shown, was in the following words, namely: "That the questions whether the deed given in evidence was made in good faith, and whether the defendant has occupied the said land under said deed in good faith, are questions of fact which must be decided by the jury upon consideration of all the facts and circumstances given in evidence upon the trial in this cause." This fifth instruction the court refused to grant, except with the following qualification, namely: "That this, as a general proposition, is true, but as a matter of law, the court charges the jury, that any man who is in possession of land, claiming to be the owner thereof, and who permits the land to be sold for the non-payment of taxes, and who himself becomes the purchaser, and acquires a deed under such purchase, such title cannot be said within the meaning of the law, to be made in good faith."

To the above refusal and qualification by the court, the defendant in the ejectment excepted.

From the sketch which has been given of the proceedings in this cause in the circuit court, it is shown that the defendant did not found his title either exclusively or principally upon the provisions of the statute of 1835, but relied in defense of that title, and of his possession equally, if not chiefly, upon the statute of 1839, and the acts of the auditor performed in the execution and under the authority of the latter law. And it is in viewing this cause as controlled by the provisions of the statute of 1839, that we regard it as entirely disembarrassed of any doubt or perplexity, which might surround an attempt to rest its decision upon a construction of the law of 1835. Hence we have dismissed from our consideration the several questions discussed and ruled in the circuit court, with reference to the law of 1835, as being irrelevant to the points regularly involved in this cause, which depend essentially upon the statute of Illinois of 1839.

[ \* 56 ] \*By the 1st section of this statute, as we have already

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seen, it is declared: "That hereafter every person in the actual possession of land or tenements under claim and color of title made in good faith, and who shall for seven successive years after the passage of this act continue in such possession, and shall also during said time pay all taxes legally assessed on such land or tenements, shall be held and adjudged to be the legal owner of said land or tenements, to the extent and according to the purport of his or her paper title."

There exists no controversy in this case as to the facts, that the defendant in the ejectment proved the actual possession by him of the land, and the payment of all the taxes assessed thereon, for seven successive years previously to the institution of this suit. The proof of these facts by the defendant, therefore, left open under the 1st section of the statute of 1839 the single inquiry, whether it was shown or attempted to be shown by him that he held under claim and color of title made in good faith.

We deem it unnecessary to examine in detail, the numerous decisions adduced in the argument for the plaintiff in error, to define and establish the meaning of the phrase, "color of title." The courts have concurred, it is believed, without an exception, in defining "color of title" to be that which in appearance is title, but which in reality is no title. They have equally concurred in attaching no exclusive or peculiar character or importance to the ground of the invalidity of an apparent or colorable title; the inquiry with them has been, whether there was an apparent or colorable title, under which an entry or a claim has been made in good faith.

We refer to a few decisions by this court which are deemed conclusive to the point, that a claim to property, under a conveyance, however inadequate to carry the true title to such property, and however incompetent might have been the power of the grantor in such conveyance to pass a title to the subject thereof, yet a claim asserted under the provisions of such a deed is strictly a claim under color of title, and one which will draw to the possession of the grantee the protection of the statutes of limitation, other requisites of those statutes being complied with. We will lastly, upon this point, refer to a recent decision of the supreme court of the State of Illinois, which not less for its intrinsic strength than on account of the circumstance that it is an interpretation by the highest judicial authority of the State, of the peculiar local legislation of that State, is entitled to special attention and respect.

In the case of *Gregg v. The Lessee of Sayre and Wife*, 8 Pet. 253, 254, in which the question was raised as to the effect of a deed impeached either for fraud in the grantor, or \* want [ \* 57 ]

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of estate in him co-extensive with the terms of the instrument, this court say: "It is not necessary to decide whether these conveyances were fraudulently made by Ormsby, (the grantor,) or not. The important point is to know whether Gregg and wife (the grantees) had knowledge of the fraud if committed, or participated in it. This knowledge the circuit court charged the jury was immaterial, as the fraud of Ormsby rendered the deeds void, and consequently they could give no color of title to an adverse possession. This construction is clearly erroneous. If Ormsby be justly chargeable with fraud, yet if Gregg and wife did not participate in it; if, when they received their deeds, they had no knowledge of it, there can be no doubt that the deeds do give color of title under the statute of limitations. Upon their face the deeds purport to convey a title in fee; and having been accepted in good faith by Gregg and wife, they show the nature and extent of their claim to the premises."

The case of *Ewing v. Burnett*, 11 Pet. 41, was one in which plaintiff and defendant claimed under conveyances from the same grantor. The grantee in the junior deed relied upon his title as being protected by proof of adverse possession for the time of limitation. The introduction of this deed was objected to, because, as it was alleged, the defendant had notice of the claim of the grantee in the elder conveyance. To an objection thus urged to the introduction of the junior deed, this court said, that "there were two answers: first, that the jury might have negatived the proof of such notice; secondly, though there was such notice of a prior deed as would make a subsequent one inoperative to pass a title, yet an adverse possession for twenty-one years, under claim and color of title, merely void, is a bar."

So late as the year 1851, in the case of *Pillow v. Roberts*, in the 13th of Howard, 472, speaking of the protection extended by statutes of limitation to a possession held under claim of color of title, this court say: "Statutes of limitation would be but of little use if they protected those only who could otherwise show an indefeasible title to the land. Hence color of title even under a void and worthless deed, has always been received as evidence that the person in possession claims adversely to all the world." And again, in the same case, it is said, in order to entitle the defendant to set up the bar of the statute after five years' adverse possession, he had only to show that he and those under whom he claimed held under a deed from a collector of the revenue of lands sold for the non-payment of taxes; he was not bound to show that all the prerequisites of the law had been complied with in order to make the deed a valid



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and indefeasible conveyance of title. If the court should require such proof before the defendant could have the benefit of this law, it would \*require him to show that he had no [ \* 58 ] need of the protection of the statute before he could be entitled to it. Such a construction would annul the statute altogether, which was evidently intended to save the defendant from the difficulty, after such a length of time, of showing the validity of his tax title.

The case of *Woodward v. Blanchard*, decided by the supreme court of Illinois within a few months past, was like the case at present under review—an action of ejectment against a purchaser of land sold for the non-payment of taxes.

The defendant in the ejectment, relied for the maintenance and protection of his title and possession, upon the statute of Illinois of 1839, already quoted; professing to hold under claim and color of title as expressed in that statute, all the other requirements of the law being fulfilled. The defense thus alleged, superinduced necessarily a construction of the statute as to the signification of the phrase, “claim or color of title made in good faith,” and in their interpretation the court institute a comparison between its provisions and those of the statute of 1835, and point out the distinctive features of each. With respect to the law of 1839, they say: “There is in this act not only a change in the facts, but an evident intention to dispense with part of the requirements of the former act, and to relax the strictness required in others. Possession is retained in one case, but residence is dispensed with; connection in the chain to be deduced of record, and its deduction from specified sources, are dispensed with; in place of these, claim and color of title made in good faith, with the payment of taxes, are substituted as to lands in possession. But, as to another class of lands, (vacant and unoccupied,) possession and claim are both dispensed with, and the party is only required to show color of title in good faith.” Further on the court say: “We are, therefore, under this defense, not driven to the springs or sources of the title, to inquire if they be pure, nor to the successive channels through which it may pass, for the purpose of removing obstructions to or difficulties in its course and transmission. But we come at once to the party defendant, to inquire if he had a claim and color of title with his possession, at the beginning of this period; if they were made in good faith, and his possession continued and was accompanied by the payment of taxes for seven successive years.” What say the court is claim? The act of taking possession, if otherwise unexplained, will be referable to the paper title, and understood as

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making claim under it. Color of title may be made through conveyances, or bonds, or contracts, or bare possession under parol agreements.

Nor is it at all important, whether the title be weak or strong ; for color of title is acquired to establish an adverse possession [ \* 59 ] sion \*for the operation of the statute, which commences by disseisin of the rightful owner with a claim of the land. But our statute requires this color of title to be accompanied by a written evidence, "a paper title," and an act or motion of the mind. It must be in good faith. Defects in the title may not be urged against it as destroying color, but, at the same time, might have an important and legitimate influence in showing a want of confidence and good faith in the mind of the vendee, if they were known to him, and he believed the title therefore to be fraudulent and void. What is color of title is matter of law, and when the facts exhibiting the title are shown, the court will determine whether they amount to color of title. But good faith in the party in claiming under such color, is purely a question of fact, to be found and settled as other facts in the cause. We can entertain no doubt in this case that the auditor's deed to the purchaser at the tax sale is color of title in Woodward, in the true intent and meaning of the statute, and without regard to its intrinsic worth as a title. "Good faith," (say the court,) "is doubtless used here in its popular sense, as the actual existing state of the mind, whether so from ignorance, skepticism, sophistry, delusion, or imbecility, and without regard to what it should be from given legal standards of law or reason."

We have quoted at some length from the opinion of the supreme court of Illinois, both on account of the clearness and accuracy of its reasoning, and on account of the respect which is due to it, as an interpretation of a statute of the State by her supreme judicial authority. We entirely approve of the exposition of the supreme court of Illinois, in its opinion of what constitutes color of title, upon well established general principles, and within the scope and meaning of the statute of 1839, and in relation to the nature of the question of what constituted good faith in the possessor of such colorable title, and also as to the manner in which that question should be determined, namely, as a question of fact determinable by the jury, and not by the court.

But the court in the case before us withdrew from the jury, and assumed upon itself the right of deciding upon the motives and intention of the defendant in the ejectment ; and it was with the view, doubtless, of exercising this function, that the qualification



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to the fifth prayer of the defendant was added by the court, and that the court had previously at the instance of the plaintiff, instructed the jury, that although the deed of the 10th of January, 1833, from the auditor to the defendant, was of itself such a title as would protect the party in possession under the act of 1839, connected with payment of taxes, and continued possession for the period of limitation, yet, if the \*defendant [ \* 60 ] being in possession of the land in controversy, had permitted it to be sold for taxes, and had himself become the purchaser thereof, the deed of the auditor, in pursuance of such sale, could convey no title to the defendant, and was not a title obtained in good faith. The accuracy or inaccuracy of the legal positions taken by the court in this instruction, we deem it not necessary at present to determine.

We hold, that in assuming to decide upon the question of good faith on the part of the defendant, the court exerted an authority not legitimately belonging to it; a power exclusively appertaining to the jury. We further hold, that it was error in the court to decide as it did upon the prayer of the plaintiff in the ejectment, and by its qualification annexed to the fifth prayer of the defendant, that the deed from the auditor of the 10th of January, 1833, was not such an instrument as could be adduced in evidence under the statute of 1839, in order to show color of title. We are therefore of the opinion that the decision of the circuit court be reversed, and that this cause be remanded to that court, with directions to order a *venire facias de novo* for the trial thereof, in conformity with the law as herein expounded.

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JOHN G. GRAHAM, Plaintiff in Error, v. ALEXANDER BAYNE.

18 H. 60.

PRACTICE IN SUPREME COURT—STATEMENT OF FACTS.

1. On a writ of error this court cannot review a judgment founded on an agreed statement of facts, which statement is not in itself sufficient without a comparison and weighing of the evidence by this court.
2. No mere agreement of counsel can substitute evidence of facts in place of legal facts, or require the opinion of this court on an imperfect statement of them; nor can this court, on writ of error, weigh and compare evidence as on an appeal in chancery.
3. Where such an agreed statement has been made, neither party being to blame for its insufficiency, to raise the legal questions supposed to be involved in the case; this court may treat it as a mistrial, and reverse the judgment, that a new trial may be had. 18 How. 135; 1 Wall. 99; 12 Wall. 275.

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Graham v. Bayne.

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THE case, which is brought here by a writ of error from the circuit court for the northern district of Illinois, is fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Browning*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Williams*, for defendant.

[ \* 61 ] \*Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

This case was tried in the circuit court for the district of Illinois, without the intervention of a jury, and under the following agreement of counsel:

“Be it remembered, that upon the calling of this cause for trial, by the mutual agreement of the parties, and in accordance with the laws and practice of this State, a jury was waived, and both matters of law and fact were submitted to the court, upon the distinct understanding that the right of either party should be full and perfect to object to the admission of improper evidence, and to insist upon the admission of competent evidence, with the same privilege of excepting to the rulings of the court in either case, as though the cause were tried by a jury; and with the right to either party to avail himself in the supreme court of any erroneous ruling in this court, precisely as though the cause had been submitted to a jury, and with liberty to either party, if it should be necessary to a hearing of this cause in the supreme court, to treat the evidence in this cause in the nature of a special verdict.”

The common law has been adopted by Illinois, and all the States except Louisiana. In that State, the courts of the United States have been compelled to adopt the forms of pleading and practice peculiar to the civil law and the code. That system knows no distinction between law and equity. All cases are tried alike, on petition and answer, with or without the intervention of a jury, as the parties may elect.

This court having separate jurisdiction, both in equity and law, is compelled to distinguish. They can review cases in common law by writ of error only, and on bills of exception presenting questions of law. The circuit courts may adopt the forms of pleading and practice of the State courts, but no State legislation can be applied to the practice of this court, and the mode in which causes shall be brought into it for review.

The very numerous cases on this subject, (from *Field v. United States*, 9 Pet. 182, to *Arthurs and Hart*, 17 How. 6,) show the difficulties we have had to encounter in reconciling our modes of review to the civil code of practice as used in the courts of Louisiana.

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But in the States governed by the common law, and where the circuit courts are not compelled to adopt every new code of practice invented for the benefit of State courts, there is no reason why the strict rules of the common law should be in anywise relaxed or changed in this court, to suit the anomalies in practice thus introduced in the circuit courts. That the courts of the United States should not be hasty in adopting new codes of practice, which attempt to ingraft the civil law system of \*pleading [ \* 62 ] and practice on the stalk of the common law, the cases of *Butterworth v. Burnet*, and *Toby v. Randon*, 11 How., most amply demonstrate.

The 11th section of the practice act of Illinois, (March 3, 1845,) permits matters both of fact and law to be tried by the court, if both parties agree.

Counsel may agree, as in this case, to submit both fact and law to the decision of the court; but they cannot, by agreement, introduce a new practice into this court, or compel us to adopt the provisions of the 22d section of the same act, as to the mode in which such cases shall be reviewed in error. The practice of this court is regulated by the common law and acts of congress only. See *Bayard v. Lombard*, 9 How. 530.

If the parties agree to submit the trial both of fact and law to the judge, they constitute him an arbitrator, or referee, whose award must be final and conclusive between them; but no consent can constitute this court appellate arbitrators. When the error alleged does not appear on the face of the record, or on a demurrer, a bill of exceptions to the ruling of the court on questions of law, either in admitting or rejecting testimony, or in their instructions to the jury, constitutes the only mode of bringing a case before this court for review.

It is true, that when there is no dispute as to the facts, counsel may agree on a case stated in the nature of a special verdict; and the judgment of the court below on such case stated, or verdict, may be reviewed here on a writ of error. See *Stimpson v. The Railroad*, 10 How. 329.

The counsel in this case have agreed, that "if it should be necessary to a hearing of this cause in the supreme court, to treat the evidence in the nature of a special verdict," this agreement may be good as between themselves, and point out the source from which the facts for a case stated, or special verdict, may be drawn, but it cannot compel this court to search through the evidence to find out the facts. The record exhibits the testimony and evidence laid before the judge. It is evidence of facts, but not the facts them-

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selves as agreed or found. The court below decided that a certain deed given in evidence did not show sufficient "color of title" under the limitation law of Illinois. The act referred to requires not only "color of title," but a possession taken and held "in good faith," with payment of taxes. The question of "good faith" is one of fact, or of mixed fact and law, to be decided by the jury under proper instructions from the court. It is one necessary to be ascertained before the court can give a judgment.

Even if we should consent to review this loose statement of evidence as a case stated, it contains no finding or agreement [ \* 63 ] \* whatever as to this material fact. Where there is a case stated, or special verdict, the court of error must not only reverse the judgment below, if found erroneous, but enter a correct and final judgment.

If a special verdict be ambiguous, or imperfect—if it find but the evidence of facts, and not the facts themselves, or finds but part of the facts in issue, and is silent as to others, it is a mistrial, and the court of error must order a *venire de novo*. They can render no judgment on an imperfect verdict, or case stated. See *Prentice v. Zane*, 8 How. 484.

No mere agreement of counsel can substitute evidence of facts in place of facts, or require the opinion of this court on an imperfect statement of them. A writ of error cannot by these methods be converted into a chancery appeal, nor a court of error into appellate arbitrators.

The judgment of the circuit court is therefore reversed, and a *venire de novo* awarded.

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THE BRIG ANN C. PRATT.

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## CARRINGTON v. PRATT.

18 H. 63.

## FRAUD IN A BOTTOMRY BOND.

1. A bottomry bond made for a larger amount than the sum actually advanced, and maritime interest, though only intended to defraud the underwriters, and known to the owner, cannot be enforced as a bottomry lien on the vessel.
2. Nor can it be enforced for what was actually advanced. It is absolutely void.
3. Nor can the payee on the bond resort to his maritime lien for supplies or advances under such circumstances.
4. The case of intentional fraud distinguished from those in which sums were included in the bond not proper to a bottomry hypothecation, or so included by mistake, where it may stand good for the amount justly due.

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Carrington v. Pratt.

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THIS is an appeal in admiralty from the circuit court for the district of Maine, and the case is very fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Rowe*, for appellant.

*Mr. Fessenden*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 65 ]

This is an appeal in admiralty from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the district of Maine.

The original libel, filed by Carrington in the district court against the brig, was founded upon a bottomry bond executed by Airey, the mate and acting master, at the island of St. Thomas, by which the vessel was hypothecated to the libellant for the payment of the sum of \$4,591.42, advanced by him for her necessary repairs and supplies, she having arrived at that port in a disabled condition, together with ten per cent. maritime interest, the whole sum amounting to \$5,050.56.

The defense set up to the libel, so far as it is material to be noticed, was that the bond had been executed for a much larger sum than was loaned, and was received by the lender knowing the same, and in fraud of the rights of the parties interested.

Upon the coming of the proofs, it appeared that the sum really advanced to the acting master was but \$3,877.25, it  
\* being \$714.17 less than the amount for which the bond [ \* 66 ] was given.

The proofs further showed that the two sets of accounts and vouchers were made out by the clerk of the libellant; the one corresponding with the truth of the case, the other with the fictitious amount of the bottomry bond; both of which sets were forwarded to the father of the captain of the brig, with letters of advice, both from the lender and Airey, the mate, informing him that the bond was given for the larger sum, and the false accounts and vouchers sent, to enable the owner to make a claim for the same against the underwriters upon the vessel. Captain Pratt, the master of the brig, was on shore with the ship's papers, at St. Michael, when the storm occurred that disabled the vessel, and became separated from her, when Airey, the mate, took the command and proceeded to St. Thomas. By an arrangement between Airey and the libellant, it was agreed that the former should draw a bill in favor of the latter, upon the father of Captain Pratt, for the actual sum advanced, and if paid at maturity, (thirty days' sight,) the maritime interest of

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ten per cent. would be relinquished. This accounts for the communication of the parties with the father on the subject, instead of with Captain Pratt himself.

The district court, after allowing an amendment of the libel at the sitting, setting up a claim upon the vessel for the true sum advanced, with the maritime interest, held that a lien existed upon the brig, in favor of the libellant, for this amount, by operation of the general admiralty law, and decreed accordingly.

The claimant appealed to the circuit court; that court reversed the decree below, and dismissed the libel, concurring with the district judge that the bottomry bond was fraudulent and void, and could not be admitted as the foundation of a decree in favor of the libellant, for any amount; but differed with him upon the other question in the case, and held that the contract between Airey and the lender, for security by bottomry, and fulfillment of that agreement by the execution of the bond, were acts wholly inconsistent with the idea of a general or implied maritime lien on the vessel, and that none therefore existed.

Upon full consideration, we all agree that the decree of the circuit court is right, and should be affirmed.

As it respects the right to a recovery upon a bottomry bond, the libellant is met by the defense resting upon the familiar principle that a court administering justice upon principles of equity will not lend its aid to enforce the fulfillment of a contract in favor of a party to it, which is founded in fraud. 2 Story's Eq. § 298, and cases. In such cases the court leaves both parties where the [ \* 67 ] law finds them, giving no relief or countenance to \*claims of this description. Here, the underwriters, who were sought to be defrauded by the use of the fictitious accounts and vouchers, were directly interested in the transaction, as the fair expenses of the repairs of the brig fell within one of the perils insured against. Any contrivance, therefore, to exaggerate them, or by which evidence could be furnished to enable the owner to recover on his policy a greater amount than actually advanced, was dishonest and fraudulent, and can receive no countenance in a court of justice.

It is insisted, however, that the security should be held valid for the amount actually advanced, conceding it to be void for the excess. It is true, that a bottomry bond may be good in part and bad in part, and may be upheld even in cases when taken for a sum in the aggregate larger than that which properly constitutes a lien upon the vessel within this species of security. There are many cases to this effect. Abbott, 126, n.; 1 Wheat. 107; 8 Pet. 228.



These are cases, however, in which the items rejected were not properly chargeable on the ship, or were embraced within the bond from inadvertence or mistake, and entirely consistent with the good faith of the parties in the transaction. They stand upon widely different principles from those where the objectionable items are fictitious, and inserted in the bond with the intent to defraud third persons. The entire security in such cases becomes tainted with the fraud, and a *particeps criminis* is not allowed to come into court to enforce it, even for the money advanced or expended; for to permit it would afford countenance to the fraud by giving partial effect to it.

By holding the security valid to the extent of the loan, rejecting the excess, the guilty party would risk nothing; for, when detected in the fraud, he would still be enabled to reimburse himself for the amount really due. We have seen that the rule of equity—and which is the rule of admiralty in such cases—refuses to interfere for relief, and leaves the parties where the law finds them.

Assuming, then, the bond to be void, as an hypothecation for the money advanced, and therefore not available to charge the vessel, can the lender resort to the general or implied maritime lien that it is claimed attaches in cases of repairs or advances in the foreign port, in the absence of any special agreement to the contrary?

We think not. The contract of hypothecation, by bottomry, under which the money was loaned, is different from that implied by the general admiralty law. In the one case, the money advanced is payable only in the event of the safe arrival of the vessel at the port of destination, the lender taking the responsibility of the sea risk, and entitled to charge extraordinary inter-

\* est. According to the terms of the bond in this case, [ \* 68 ] Carrington and Company, the lenders, “agreed to stand to and bear the hazard and adventure thereof, on the hull or body of the said brig, during her voyage;” and the condition is, “to pay or cause to be paid at the expiration of five days after first arrival of said brig,” &c.; but “if, during the said voyage, an utter loss of said brig, by fire, enemies, or other casualty, shall unavoidably happen, &c., then this obligation to be void;” and in the case of hypothecation the owner is not personally liable for the advance or repairs. In the other—the case of an implied lien—the obligation to pay the money is absolute; and to secure the payment, the vessel, the credit of the owner, and of the master himself are pledged.

Now, it is well settled that the lien implied by the general ad-

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miralty law may be waived by the express contract of the parties, or by necessary implication; and the implication arises in all cases where the express contract is inconsistent with an intention to rely upon the lien. A familiar instance is where the money is advanced or repairs made, looking solely to the personal responsibility of the owner or master. Abbott, 125, n.; *ibid.* 116, n., Story's Ed. 1829. In that case, no credit being given to the vessel as a security, the implied lien is necessarily displaced.

It is true, in this case credit was given to the vessel by the lenders, and a lien thus provided for; but it was one altogether different from that implied by the admiralty law, and inconsistent with an intention to look to that as a security for the loan, as much so as if he had agreed to look solely to the personal responsibility of the owners.

It is insisted, however, assuming the bond to be void and inoperative, that the lender is then remitted to his implied lien, the same as if no bond had been given. How this might be in a case where the instrument was defective and void, for want of authority to execute it, or for any other cause consistent with the good faith of the parties, it is not now necessary to inquire or express any opinion. But we think it clear that no such principle can be admitted in a case where the bond has been avoided on the ground that it was entered into in bad faith, and with intent to defraud, on the part of the lenders. Any other conclusion would be giving to a party the benefit of his own turpitude, which the law forbids.

The admiralty law treats this species of security with a good deal of indulgence, and properly so, as the advances to the master at the foreign port by the merchant is oftentimes essential, to enable the vessel to earn her freight, and is for the general interest of commerce. The advance is made also frequently at great [ \* 69 ] \* risk, on the part of the lender, he being a stranger to the owner and master, and must look, from necessity, mainly to the pledge of the vessel for his security. The court, therefore, leans in favor of upholding these hypothecations, disregarding technical objections and nice distinctions, which sometimes invalidate instruments at common law; but they are the creatures of necessity and distress, and are entered into in the absence of the owner, who has no opportunity to guard his interests; and the transactions, therefore, out of which they arise should be strictly watched, and the observance of the utmost good faith exacted from all the parties concerned.

It has been recently held, in the court of exchequer in England, that the master can pledge the ship for repairs, or loan of money



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for that purpose, in the foreign port, only by bottomry security; and that in the absence of this, the merchant must look to the personal responsibility of the owner or master. 73 Eng. Com. Law R. 417; *Stainbank and Ambler v. Shepherd*.

As this question does not necessarily arise in this case, it is not important to inquire as to the rule of the admiralty in this country in this respect.

Judgment of the court below affirmed.

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JOHN HOLROYD, Plaintiff in Error, v. LEVI PUMPHREY.

18 H. 69.

TAX TITLE.

1. The act of congress of May 26, 1824, amending the charter of the city of Washington, declares that no sale of property for taxes shall be void by reason of its not being assessed or advertised in the name of the lawful owner thereof. Held, that a sale was valid, though James Thomas, in whose name the property was assessed and advertised, was dead when the taxes were levied.
2. That it did not invalidate the sale to show that the lots were advertised in the name of James Thomas's heirs, and bid off at a sale in a previous year for the same taxes, it appearing that said sale was never carried out by payment of the bid or deed to the bidder.

THE case is a writ of error to the circuit court for the District of Columbia, and is well stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Davis* and *Mr. Lawrence*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Carlisle* and *Mr. Bradley*, for defendant.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

This action was commenced by the plaintiff, to recover a lot \* of land situate within the city of Washington, in [ \* 70 ] possession of the defendant.

His title is derived from a sale by the city collector of taxes, in the year 1846, at which he was the purchaser; and to sustain it he produced, on the trial of the cause, evidence from the corporation records that the lot had been assessed for taxes as the property of James Thomas, for the years 1844 and 1845; that the taxes for those years were not paid; that the lot had been advertised for sale twelve weeks in one of the city papers, and that he purchased and obtained a deed for the lot from the mayor.

It appeared in the evidence, that James Thomas, to whom the

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lot had been assessed, had died in 1842; and that the lot had been advertised for sale in 1844, by the collector of taxes, to raise the taxes of that year, as the property of "the heirs of James Thomas," and bid off, but it did not appear that the taxes had been paid on this bid, or that there was any deed to the purchaser, nor was there an assessment of the lots as the property of the heirs.

The circuit court gave the following instruction to the jury:

"If, from the whole evidence aforesaid, the jury shall find that the said lots in the said declaration mentioned were, up to the year 1844, assessed on the tax books, at the city of Washington, in the name of James Thomas; that the said James Thomas, to whom they were so assessed, in his life-time held and claimed the same as his own; that he resided in the said city of Washington, and there died in November, 1842, and letters of administration on his personal estate were granted to his son by the orphans' court of Washington county, in December, 1842; that the said lots were, in December, 1844, advertised and sold by said corporation for taxes due thereon, in the name of the 'heirs of James Thomas,' and afterwards were advertised and sold as stated in said plaintiff's evidence, then the plaintiff is not entitled to recover in this action."

Our opinion is, that the sale in 1844, as the property of the "heirs of James Thomas," was inoperative upon the title of the plaintiff. The advertisement did not express the name of the person to whom the lot was assessed on the books of the corporation at the time of such assessment, as was required by the act of congress of the 26th May, 1824, amending the city charter; (4 Stats. at Large, 75, § 2;) nor were the taxes due for that year collected by means of its sale; at most, it was an abortive effort to do so, which, failing, left the lien of the corporation on the lot for the assessed taxes, and its legal remedies to enforce it, unimpaired; nor will the fact of the assessment to James Thomas after his death, nor the advertisement of the property as assessed to him, defeat the conveyance under the sale.

[ \* 71 ] \* The act of congress, above referred to, provides for the case. It declares, "that no sale of real property, for taxes hereafter made, shall be impaired or [made] void, by reason of such property not being assessed or advertised in the name or names of the lawful owner or owners thereof, provided the same shall be advertised as above directed." We have seen that the corporation was directed to advertise the name of the person to whom the lot appeared to be assessed on the books of the corporation.

The judgment of the circuit court is reversed, and the cause remanded for a *venire*, &c.

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ISAAC R. SMITH, Plaintiff in Error, v. THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

18 H. 71.

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## OYSTER BEDS—STATE JURISDICTION.

1. Whatever soil below low-water mark, within the ebb and flow of the tide, is the subject of exclusive property and ownership, belongs to the State within whose territory it lies.
2. But this soil is held by the State subject to, and in some sense in trust for, the enjoyment of certain public rights, among which is the common liberty of fishing.
3. This includes the liberty of taking shell-fish as well as floating fish.
4. The court expressly refrains from giving an opinion whether this right is restricted to citizens of the State, or can be so restricted by State statutes, or whether it can be extended, by treaty made with the United States, to foreigners, or is made common to all citizens of the United States by the federal constitution.
5. In any of these views of the subject, it is the right of the State to make and enforce laws regulating the exercise of this right, so as to prevent the destruction of the fishery, and to prevent acts which would render the public right less valuable, or destroy it altogether.
6. A statute, therefore, which forbids a mode of fishing for oysters which would destroy the beds altogether, and which forfeits the vessel engaged in that mode of taking oysters, is valid.
7. And its application by the State authorities to a vessel licensed and enrolled by the United States for the coasting trade, is no violation of such license, or of the right of the United States to regulate commerce under the federal constitution.
8. Nor does it interfere with the admiralty jurisdiction of the United States, nor that provision of the constitution which forbids warrants of seizure to be issued only on probable cause, supported by oath.

THE case is brought here by writ of error to the circuit court of the second judicial district of the State of Maryland, in and for the county of Anne Arundel.

The facts raising the points decided by this court are stated in the opinion, including the statute verbatim on which the proceeding was instituted in the State court.

*Mr. Latrobe*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Campbell*, for the State of Maryland.

\* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 72 ]

This is a writ of error to the circuit court for Anne Arundel county, in the State of Maryland, under the 25th section of the judiciary act of 1789. It appears by the record that the plaintiff in error, being a citizen of the State of Pennsylvania, was the owner of a sloop called *The Volant*, which was regularly enrolled at the port of Philadelphia, and licensed to be employed in the coasting trade and fisheries; that, in March, 1853, the schooner was seized

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by the sheriff of Anne Arundel county, while engaged in dredging for oysters in the Chesapeake bay, and was condemned to [ \* 73 ] be forfeited to the State of Maryland, \* by a justice of the peace of that State, before whom the proceeding was had; that on appeal to the circuit court for the county, being the highest court in which a decision could be had, this decree of forfeiture was affirmed; and that the plaintiff in error insisted, in the circuit court, that such seizure and condemnation were repugnant to the constitution of the United States.

This vessel being enrolled and licensed, under the constitution and laws of the United States, to be employed in the coasting trade and fisheries, and while so employed having been seized and condemned under a law of a State, the owner has a right to the decision of this court upon the question, whether the law of the State, by virtue of which condemnation passed, was repugnant to the constitution or laws of the United States.

That part of the law in question containing the prohibition and inflicting the penalty, which appears to have been applied by the State court to this case, is as follows: (1833, ch. 254:)

*“An act to prevent the destruction of oysters in the waters of this State.*

*“Whereas, the destruction of oysters in the waters of this State is seriously apprehended, from the destructive instrument used in taking them, therefore*

*SEC. 1. Be it enacted by the general assembly of Maryland, That it shall be unlawful to take or catch oysters in any of the waters of this State with a scoop or drag, or any other instrument than such tongs and rakes as are now in use, and authorized by law; and all persons whatever are hereby forbid the use of such instruments in taking or catching oysters in the waters of this State, on pain of forfeiting to the State the boat or vessel employed for the purpose, together with her papers, furniture, tackle, and apparel, and all things on board the same.”*

The question is, whether this law of the State afforded valid cause for seizing a licensed and enrolled vessel of the United States, and interrupting its voyage, and pronouncing for its forfeiture. To have this effect, we must find that the State of Maryland had power to enact this law.

The purpose of the law is, to protect the growth of oysters in the waters of the State, by prohibiting the use of particular instruments in dredging for them. No question was made in the court below whether the place in question be within the territory of the State. The law is, in terms, limited to the waters of the State. If the

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county court extended the operation of the law beyond those waters, that was a distinct and substantive ground of exception, to be specifically taken and presented on the record, accompanied by all the necessary facts to enable this court to determine whether a voyage of a vessel, \* licensed and enrolled for the coast- [ \* 74 ] ing trade, had been interrupted by force of a law of a State while on the high seas, and out of the territorial jurisdiction of such State.

To present to this court such a question upon a writ of error to a State court, it is not enough that it might have been made in the court below ; it must appear by the record that it was made, and decided against the plaintiff in error.

As we do not find from the record that any question of this kind was raised, we must consider that the acts in question were done, and the seizure made, within the waters of the State ; and that the law, if valid, was not misapplied by the county court by extending its operation, contrary to its terms, to waters without the limits of the State. What we have to consider under this writ of error is, whether the law itself, as above recited, be repugnant to the constitution or laws of the United States.

It was argued that it is repugnant to that clause of the constitution which confers on congress power to regulate commerce, because it authorizes the seizure, detention, and forfeiture of a vessel enrolled and licensed for the coasting trade, under the laws of the United States, while engaged in that trade.

But such enrollment and license confer no immunity from the operation of valid laws of a State. If a vessel of the United States, engaged in commerce between two States, be interrupted therein by a law of a State, the question arises whether the State had power to make the law by force of which the voyage was interrupted. This question must be decided, in each case, upon its own facts. If it be found, as in *Gibbon v. Ogden*, 9 Wheat. 1, that the State had not power to make the law, under which a vessel of the United States was prevented from prosecuting its voyage, then the prevention is unlawful, and the proceedings under the law invalid. But a State may make valid laws for the seizure of vessels of the United States. Such, among others, are quarantine and health laws.

In considering whether this law of Maryland belongs to one or the other of these classes of laws, there are certain established principles to be kept in view, which we deem decisive.

Whatever soil below low-water mark is the subject of exclusive propriety and ownership, belongs to the State, on whose maritime border, and within whose territory it lies, subject to any lawful

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grants of that soil by the State, or the sovereign power which governed its territory before the declaration of independence. *Pollard's Lessee v. Hagan*, 3 How: 212; *Martin v. Waddell*, 16 Pet. 367; *Den v. The Jersey Co.* 15 How. 426.

But this soil is held by the State, not only subject to, but in some sense in trust for, the enjoyment of certain public [ \*75 ] rights, \* among which is the common liberty of taking fish, as well shell-fish as floating fish. *Martin v. Waddell*; *Den v. Jersey Co.*; *Corfield v. Coryell*, 4 Wash. R. 376; *Fleet v. Hagemen*, 14 Wend. 42; *Arnold v. Munday*, 1 Halst. 1; *Parker v. Cutler Milldam Corporation*, 2 Appleton (Me.) R. 353; *Peck v. Lockwood*, 5 Day, 22; *Weston et al. v. Sampson et al.*, 8 Cush. 347. The State holds the propriety of this soil for the conservation of the public rights of fishery thereon, and may regulate the modes of that enjoyment so as to prevent the destruction of the fishery. In other words, it may forbid all such acts as would render the public right less valuable, or destroy it altogether. This power results from the ownership of the soil, from the legislative jurisdiction of the State over it, and from its duty to preserve unimpaired those public uses for which the soil is held. *Vattel*, b. 1, c. 20, s. 246; *Corfield v. Coryell*, 4 Wash. R. 376. It has been exercised by many of the States. See *Angell on Tide Waters*, 145, 156, 170, 192-3.

The law now in question is of this character. Its avowed, and unquestionably its real, object is to prevent the destruction of oysters within the waters of the State, by the use of particular instruments in taking them. It does not touch the subject of the common liberty of taking oysters, save for the purpose of guarding it from injury, to whomsoever it may belong, and by whomsoever it may be enjoyed. Whether this liberty belongs exclusively to the citizens of the State of Maryland, or may lawfully be enjoyed in common by all citizens of the United States; whether this public use may be restricted by the State to its own citizens, or a part of them, or by force of the constitution of the United States must remain common to all citizens of the United States; whether the national government, by a treaty or act of congress, can grant to foreigners the right to participate therein; or what, in general, are the limits of the trust upon which the State holds this soil, or its power to define and control that trust, are matters wholly without the scope of this case, and upon which we give no opinion.

So much of this law as is above cited may be correctly said to be not in conflict with, but in furtherance of, any and all public rights of taking oysters, whatever they may be; and it is the judgment of the court, that it is within the legislative power of the State to inter-



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rupt the voyage and inflict the forfeiture of a vessel enrolled and licensed under the laws of the United States, for a disobedience, by those on board, of the commands of such a law. To inflict a forfeiture of a vessel on account of the misconduct of those on board—treating the thing as liable to forfeiture, because the instrument of the offense is within established principles of legislation, which have been applied \* by most civilized governments. [ \* 76 ] The *Malek Adhel*, 2 How. 233–4, and cases there cited.

Our opinion is, that so much of this law as appears by the record to have been applied to this case by the court below, is not repugnant to the clause in the constitution of the United States which confers on congress power to regulate commerce.

It was also suggested, that it is repugnant to the second section of the third article, which declares that the judicial power of the United States shall extend to all cases of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction. But we consider it to have been settled by this court, in *United States v. Bevens*, 3 Wheat. 386, that this clause in the constitution did not affect the jurisdiction, nor the legislative power of the States, over so much of their territory as lies below high-water mark, save that they parted with the power so to legislate as to conflict with the admiralty jurisdiction or laws of the United States. As this law conflicts neither with the admiralty jurisdiction of any court of the United States conferred by congress, nor with any law of congress whatever, we are of opinion it is not repugnant to this clause of the constitution. The objection that the law in question contains no provision for an oath on which to found the warrant of arrest of the vessel, cannot be here maintained. So far as it rests on the constitution of the State, the objection is not examinable here, under the twenty-fifth section of the judiciary act. If rested on that clause in the constitution of the United States which prohibits the issuing of a warrant but on probable cause supported by oath, the answer is, that this restrains the issue of warrants only under the laws of the United States, and has no application to State process. *Barron v. Mayor, &c.*, of Baltimore, 7 Pet. 243; *Lessee of Livingston v. Moore et al.*, 7 Pet. 469; *Fox v. Ohio*, 5 How. 410.

The judgment of the circuit court of Maryland in and for Anne Arundel county is affirmed, with costs.

Jones v. League.

WILLIAM H. JONES and others v. THOMAS M. LEAGUE.

18 H. 76.

PLEADING—CITIZENSHIP—ALLEGATION AND PROOF.

1. Where the declaration alleges the proper citizenship of the parties, the only mode of contesting it is by a plea in abatement denying such citizenship. In such plea the burden of proof is on the defendant.
2. A change of residence, with real intent to remain, makes a change of citizenship, and though made with intent to give jurisdiction, will be sufficient for that purpose.
3. But where the conveyance of title made to such person by a citizen of the State in which the suit is brought contains matter which shows that neither the ownership of the property so conveyed nor the pretended change of residence is *bona fide*, the court will not entertain jurisdiction if there is a plea denying the citizenship of plaintiff.

THIS is a writ of error to the district court of the United States for the district of Texas.

The opinion contains the pleadings, facts, and instructions on which the case was decided by this court.

*Mr. Hale*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Hughes*, for defendant.

[ \* 79 ] \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the district court of the United States of the district of Texas.

The plaintiff filed his petition in the district court, alleging that he was seized in fee of a certain tract of land in the county of Refugio, on St. Joseph's island, in the State of Texas; beginning, on said island, at the point nearest the Aransas bar; thence in a northeasterly direction with the sea-shore to the inlet from the sea into the bay; thence north forty-five degrees west to the shore of the bay or lagoon; thence, with the meanders of the bay, to the place of beginning, containing three and one-half leagues, be the same more or less. That the defendants entered the same by force and ejected the plaintiff.

And the petition further represents, that the plaintiff having possession of several other tracts of lands of which he was  
[ \* 80 ] \* seized, the defendants forcibly entered and dispossessed him, &c.; and the petitioner prayed that after due trial, according to the forms of law, he may have judgment for his damages aforesaid, for the recovery of the lands aforesaid.

The defendants plead that the court ought not to take further cognizance of the action of the plaintiff, because they say that the

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plaintiff claims title under and through a pretended indenture, purporting to be made and entered into on the 11th of May, 1850; by a certain John Power, of the county of Refugio, and State of Texas, a certain James Hewetson, of the State of Coahuila, and Republic of Mexico, by his attorney in fact, James Power; and the said James Power, acting for and in behalf of the representatives of Duncan S. Walker, deceased, of the one part, and Thomas M. League, of the city of Galveston, and State of Texas aforesaid, of the other part, but really, and in law and fact, only by the said James Power, of the one part, and the plaintiff, of the other part; which said indenture purported to convey from James Power unto the plaintiff, his heirs and assigns forever, the said tracts and parcels of land described in the petition, and which the plaintiff seeks to recover in this action.

The said conveyance being made to the plaintiff in trust for the following purposes: that the said League should commence all such suit, or suits, as might be necessary to settle the title to said lands, in the district court, and, should a decision be made adversely in said court, that he would prosecute a writ of error or appeal to the supreme court of the United States; and when the litigation was finally determined, the said League would convey two-thirds of the land recovered, in which the title should be settled, to said Power and Hewetson, and the representatives of the said Walker, and their heirs and assigns; and, until such conveyances were made, should hold said lands for the benefit of said parties; and the plaintiff agreed to pay one-third of the expense of litigation, and the expense before that time incurred, which it was agreed amounted to one thousand dollars.

And the defendants allege, that the said Power, at the time of the conveyance, and for years before and ever since, has been a citizen of Texas; and that the said plaintiff has resided in the State of Texas for twelve years, and is a citizen of that State. That before commencing suit he went to Maryland and other States, and remained absent about four months, and on his return brought this suit as a citizen of Maryland; and that the said conveyance was colorable, and was made to give jurisdiction to the courts of the United States.

Three other pleas were filed representing that the conveyance \* was made by Power, a citizen of Texas, and who [ \* 81 ] is the real plaintiff in the case, to give jurisdiction to the federal courts, and that League is a nominal plaintiff.

The plaintiff admits, for the purposes of this cause, that the only legal title which he claims to have to the several tracts of land in

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Jones v. League.

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his petition described, is that conveyed to him by James Power, of the State of Texas.

A demurrer was filed to the first plea, and issues joined as to the others.

At an early period of this court, it was held in some of the circuit courts, that the averment of citizenship, to give jurisdiction, must be proved on the general issue. And as a consequence of this view, if at any stage of the cause it appeared that the plaintiff's averment of citizenship was not true, he failed in his suit. But it is now held, and has been so held for many years, that if the defendant disputes the allegation of citizenship in the declaration, he must plead the fact in abatement of the suit; and that this must be done in the order of pleading, as at common law.

In this case, jurisdiction is claimed by the citizenship of the parties. The plaintiff avers that he is a citizen of Maryland, and that the defendants are citizens of Texas.

In one of the pleas, it is averred that the plaintiff lived in Texas twelve years and upwards, and that, for the purpose of bringing this suit, he went to the State of Maryland, and was absent from Texas about four months.

The change of citizenship, even for the purpose of bringing a suit in the federal court, must be with the *bona fide* intention of becoming a citizen of the State to which the party removes. Nothing short of this can give him a right to sue in the federal courts, held in the State from whence he removed. If League was not a citizen of Maryland, his short absence in that State, without a *bona fide* intention of changing his citizenship, could give him no right to prosecute this suit.

But it very clearly appears from the deed of conveyance to the plaintiff, by Power, that it was only colorable, as the suit was to be prosecuted for the benefit of the grantor, and the one-third of the lands to be received by the plaintiff was in consideration that he should pay one-third of the costs, and superintend the prosecution of the suit. The owner of a tract of land may convey it in order that the title may be tried in the federal courts, but the conveyance must be made *bona fide*, so that the prosecution of the suit shall not be for his benefit.

The judgment of the district court is reversed, for want of jurisdiction in that court.

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Bush v. Person.

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DAVID BUSH, Plaintiff in Error, v. JAMES I. PERSON, Administrator, &c.

18 H. 82.

COVENANTS OF TITLE RUNNING WITH THE LAND AS AFFECTED BY THE DISCHARGE IN  
BANKRUPTCY OF THE COVENANTER.

1. Where a person mortgaged land on which there was a prior judgment lien, the use of the words, "grant, bargain, and sell," by the law of Mississippi, created a covenant against the encumbrance of that judgment.
2. His subsequent discharge under the bankrupt law of 1841, while it released him from the personal liability on the debt or covenant of the mortgage, did not destroy the covenant, as one attached to and running with the property.
3. So that when, after his discharge in bankruptcy, he purchased the property at a sale under the prior judgment, he was estopped to set this up as a superior title to the mortgage, in which was the implied covenant of warranty against that judgment.

WRIT of error to the high court of errors and appeals of the State of Mississippi. The opinion contains all necessary statement of the case.

*Mr. Bayard*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Crittenden*, for defendant.

Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court.

A bill to foreclose a mortgage on a lot of land in Mississippi was filed by the administrator of the assignee of the mortgage, in the superior court of chancery in that State. The complainant obtained a decree of foreclosure, and the respondent appealed to the high court of errors and appeals, where the decree of the superior court of chancery was affirmed. The appellant then prosecuted the writ of error, which brings the case before this court.

The case was, shortly, this: The appellant was one of two mortgagers. When the mortgage was executed, the land was encumbered by a lien from a judgment previously recovered against the mortgagers.

After executing the mortgage the appellant became a bankrupt, under the act of congress of August 19, 1841, (5 Stats. at Large, 440,) and received his discharge. The land was exposed to sale to satisfy the judgment lien, and the appellant, after his  
\* discharge, purchased it. The court of appeals of Missis- [ \* 83 ]  
sippi decided:

1. That though the deed of mortgage contained no express covenant of warranty, the words "grant, bargain, and sell," which were

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in the deed, under the law of that State, imported covenants of warranty of title, and against encumbrances, and for quiet enjoyment, as effectually as though such covenants had been expressly set out in the deed.

2. That, under the law of Mississippi, if there had been no discharge in bankruptcy, the appellant would be estopped by his covenants from setting up his after-acquired title to defeat the mortgage.

3. That the discharge in bankruptcy did not enable him to do so.

This last position is the only one re-examinable here; the decision by the State court, of all matters depending exclusively upon the law of the State, being conclusive, on a writ of error, under the 25th section of the judiciary act of 1789.

The question for our consideration is, what effect the discharge of a bankrupt has upon estoppels, arising by law from covenants of warranty contained in his deeds of conveyance of land.

To determine this, it is necessary to have in view the different modes of operation of such covenants. They are contracts, and an action lies for recovery of the damages sustained by their breach. At law, they run with the land; and if the covenantor subsequently acquire an outstanding paramount title, it enures by force of the covenant to him who claims under the deed of the covenantor. This rule is now established in the law of this country, and has been affirmed in numerous decisions in this and other courts. Many of them may be found collected in a note to 2 Smith's Leading Cases, 545, &c.

In equity, the covenantor is treated as estopped by his covenant to assert that any outstanding title existed inconsistent with what he undertook to sell and convey.

The argument on the part of the appellant is, that, under the 4th section of the bankrupt act, he was discharged from all debts, contracts, and other engagements provable under the act; that not only the debt secured by this mortgage, but the covenant of warranty itself, was provable under the act. And, consequently, the covenantor, being released from the covenant, it could no longer have the operation allowed to it by the courts of Mississippi.

It must be admitted, that if the covenantee or his assignee had released the covenant, it would be difficult to maintain that it could continue in existence for any purpose. But it must be considered, that whatever discharge has taken place in this [ \* 84 ] case, \* is by force of a statute, which may have so qualified and limited its effect as still to leave the covenant in existence for one purpose, though not for others; and that the ques-

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tion, whether it has done so, can be determined only by examining the act, and ascertaining the will of the legislature in this particular.

The second section of the act contains this proviso: "That nothing in this act contained shall be construed to annul, destroy, or impair any lawful rights of married women, or minors, or any liens, mortgages, or other securities on property, real or personal, which may be valid by the laws of the States respectively, and which are not inconsistent with the provisions of the second and fifth sections of this act." There does not appear to have been anything in this mortgage inconsistent with those sections; and it is not denied that the mortgage itself, considered simply as a conveyance of the land, remained unaffected by the act.

It is therefore obvious, that though the bankrupt, personally, was released by the act, the debt due from the land continued undischarged. In this particular, beyond all doubt, the discharge by the act differs from a release by the creditor; since, if the latter had released the debtor, the mortgage would thereby have been satisfied, and the charge on the land destroyed.

The intention of the legislature to carry out this distinction between the personal liability of the debtor and the liability of the land, and to preserve the latter in full force, unaffected by the discharge of the debtor, is clearly declared by the act. The act says, in so many words, that a mortgage, valid by the law of the State, shall not be impaired by anything in the act.

We think there is sufficient reason why this proviso should be so construed as completely to save the effect and operation of all estoppels running with the land and operating at law to pass the legal title, or in equity to conclude the grantor from asserting the existence of a title inconsistent with what he undertook to sell and convey. The purpose of the legislature to afford complete and effectual protection to mortgage titles, against anything which was to be done under the act, and the broad and strong terms in which this purpose is expressed, require us to say, that the debtor cannot derive from the act an enabling power to do or assert anything which will impair a mortgage otherwise valid. Nor is there any incongruity with established principles, in holding that the personal discharge of the debtor does not free him from the estoppel.

If this obligation could rest solely upon a covenant, effectual in law to charge the grantor in a personal action, it would follow, that when such personal liability was released by the bankrupt act, the estoppel would naturally fall with it; and that an

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[ \* 85 ] \*intention to preserve the estoppel ought to be clearly indicated to induce the court to say it was not destroyed; but such estoppels do not depend on personal liability for damages. This is apparent, when we remember that estoppels bind, not only parties, but privies in blood and estate, though not personally liable on the covenants creating the estoppel. See *Carver v. Jackson*, 4 Pet. 85, 87; *White v. Patten*, 24 Pick. 324; *Mark v. Willard*, 13 New Hamp. R. 389; *Baxter v. Bradbury*, 20 Maine R. 260.

Indeed, it is the settled doctrine of this court, not only that no existing personal liability is necessary to work an estoppel, but that none need have existed at any time. In *Van Renssalaer v. Kearney et al.*, 11 How. 322, it was held, after great consideration and a full examination of the authorities, that "if a deed bear on its face evidence that the grantors intended to convey, and the grantee expected to become invested with, an estate of a particular description or quality, and that the bargain had proceeded upon that footing between the parties; then, although it may not contain any covenants of title, in the technical sense of the term, still, the legal operation and effect of the instrument will be as binding on the grantor and those claiming under him, in respect to the estate thus described, as if a formal covenant to that effect had been inserted; at least, so far as to estop them from ever afterwards denying that he was seized of the particular estate at the time of the conveyance."

It is familiar law, also, which was applied in *Carver v. Jackson*, 4 Pet. 86, 88, that a mere recital of a fact in a deed is as effectual an estoppel as a covenant. There is no necessary connection, therefore, between the personal liability of the debtor on his covenant, and the estoppel which arises therefrom; and it is not an incongruity for the legislature to preserve the latter while they discharge the former.

Estoppels which run with the land and work thereon are not mere conclusions; they pass estates, and constitute titles; they are muniments of title, assuring it to the purchaser. Their operation is highly beneficial, tending to produce security of titles; and if a discharge under the bankrupt law were allowed to destroy this mode of assurance, it would in an important particular impair the operation of deeds containing it. This, by the express words of the bankrupt law, is prohibited.

In *Stewart v. Anderson*, 10 Alabama R. 504, the supreme court of Alabama had this precise question before them, and held the bankrupt estopped. A similar decision was made by the court of appeals of Maryland in reference to the effect of a discharge under

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the insolvent law of that State. *Dorsey v. Gasaway*, 2 H. and J. 411.

\*Our opinion is, that the decree of the high court of [ \* 86 ] errors and appeals of Mississippi should be affirmed, with costs.

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SAMUEL VERDEN, Plaintiff in Error, v. ISAAC COLEMAN.

18 H. 86.

WHAT IS A FINAL DECREE.

The court re-asserts the principle that an order dissolving an injunction is not such a final decree as can be re-examined in this court, unless it disposes of the bill, although such order may have been affirmed on appeal in a State court.

THE case is brought by writ of error to the supreme court of Indiana, and requires no further statement than what is found in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Gillett*, for plaintiff in error.

No appearance for defendant.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

The plaintiff filed his bill in the circuit court of Benton county, Indiana, sitting in chancery, to obtain a decree to cancel a mortgage and the mortgage note, and also to restrain, by injunction, the mortgagee from proceeding upon the power of sale contained in the mortgage until the final hearing, and from thence perpetually.

A temporary injunction was granted in vacation upon the usual conditions, which was dissolved, on the coming in of the answers upon the motion of the defendants, by the circuit court.

From the order dissolving the injunction there was an appeal to the supreme court of Indiana, where, after argument, the decree of the circuit court was affirmed. Upon this decree this writ of error is prosecuted.

This court has repeatedly decided that a decree upon a motion to dissolve an injunction in the course of a chancery cause, and where the bill is not finally disposed of, is not such a final decree as can be re-examined in this court, under the terms of the 25th section of the judiciary act of 24th September, 1789. *McCollum v. Eager*, 2 How. 61; *Gibbons v. Ogden*, 6 Wheat. 448.

The writ of error is dismissed.



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Minter v. Crommelin.

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WILLIAM J. MINTER and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. CHARLES CROMMELIN.

18 H. 87.

ATTACKING A PATENT FOR LAND.

1. Under the act of March 3, 1817, the secretary of the treasury was authorized to decide when an Indian reservee had abandoned his land, and the secretary alone could offer it for public sale.
2. A patent issued by him for such land carries the presumption that the reservee has abandoned it, and that all the acts necessary to make a perfect sale have been complied with.
3. Although a patent may be defeated by showing a want of power in the officer by whom it was made, this must be established by the party assailing it, and no presumption will be indulged that the secretary did not do his duty in such case.

WRIT of error to the supreme court of Alabama. The facts are fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Phillips*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Bradley*, for defendant.

Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court.

The material facts of this case are as follows:

On the 12th April, 1820, a certificate, No. 28, issued from the land office of the United States to Tallasse Fixico, a friendly chief of the Creeks, appropriating to his use and occupancy fraction 24, T. 18, R. 18, east of Coosa river, in pursuance of the act of congress, of 3d March, 1817, passed to carry into effect the treaty of Fort Jackson, of August 9, 1814, with the Creek Indians.

The reservee, Tallasse Fixico, was in possession of the land, and while in possession, in 1828, he sold it, for a valuable consideration, to George Taylor, to whom he gave a deed and the possession of the land at the time of sale.

The said Taylor, while in possession, in July, 1834, sold to C. Crommelin, the defendant in error, a portion of the land, about forty acres. The purchaser received deeds for the same at the time of sale, dated 12th and 14th July, 1834, and immediately, or a short time thereafter, entered into possession, and has continued in possession until the present time.

On the 4th of June, 1839, Isham Bilberry and Samuel Lee obtained from the land office at Cahawba, a pre-emption certificate, No. 35,014, in their favor, under the pre-emption act of [ \* 88 ] \* 1834, for southeast fractional quarter of sec. 24, T. 18, R. 18, being a part of Tallasse Fixico's reservation, and

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embracing the land in possession of the defendant in error, and which is the land sued for, namely, the forty acres purchased by him from Taylor.

On the same day, namely, 4th June, 1839, Bilberry and Lee assigned the pre-emption certificate to the plaintiffs in error, Hiram F. Saltmarsh, William T. Minter, and Ashley Parker, in whose favor a patent was subsequently issued.

The State court charged the jury "that if they found the defendant held for a series of years, and continued to hold possession under deeds from Taylor, and that Taylor held possession under Tallasse Fixico, and that the plaintiffs were never in possession; that then, the defendant held under color of title, and was in a condition to contest the validity of the patent.

"2. That the certificate of possession which issued to Tallasse Fixico, was an appropriation of the land by the government of the United States to a particular purpose; and that if Tallasse Fixico, in 1828 or 1829, did abandon said land, it was not subject to entry under the pre-emption laws. That the patent, under which the plaintiffs claimed title, was issued under the pre-emption laws of the United States; that the land conveyed by said patent was not subject to entry under pre-emption, and that, therefore, said patent had issued contrary to law, and was void."

To this charge the plaintiffs excepted.

A verdict and judgment were rendered for the defendant, and the plaintiffs took up the cause to the supreme court of Alabama, where the judgment was affirmed, to bring up which judgment a writ of error was prosecuted out of this court.

The State court in effect pronounced the patent, under which the plaintiffs claimed title, to be void for want of authority in the officers of the United States to issue it, on the supposition that the land was reserved from sale when it was entered and granted. The presumption is, that the patent is valid, and passed the legal title; and, furthermore, it is *prima facie* evidence of itself that all the incipient steps had been regularly taken before the title was perfected by the patent. It has been so held by this court in many instances, commencing with the case of Polk v. Wendell, 9 Cranch, 98, 99.

But if the executive officers had no authority to issue the patent because the land was not subject to entry and grant, then it is void, and the want of power may be proved by a defendant at law. 9 Cranch, 99. And the question here is, whether the defendant has proved the want of authority?

The 6th section of the act of 1817 provides that no land

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The Bay State.

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[ \* 89 ] \* reserved to a Creek warrior, should be offered for sale by the register of the land office, unless specially directed by the secretary of the treasury. Both by the treaty and the act of congress, it was declared that if the Indian abandoned the reserved land, it became forfeited to the United States. The fact of abandonment, the secretary was authorized to decide, and if he did so find, he might then order the land to be sold as other public lands. The rule being that the patent is evidence that all previous steps had been regularly taken to justify making of the patent; and one of the necessary previous steps here being an order from the secretary to the register to offer the land for sale, because the warrior had abandoned it, we are bound to presume that the order was given. That such is the effect, as evidence, of the patent produced by the plaintiffs, was adjudged in the case of *Bagnell v. Broderick*, 13 Pet. 450, and is not open to controversy anywhere, and the State court was mistaken in holding otherwise.

The defendant being in possession, without any title from the United States, we deem it unnecessary to discuss the effect of the parol proof introduced in the State circuit court to defeat the patent.

It is therefore ordered that the judgment of the supreme court of Alabama be reversed.

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THE BAY STATE.

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McCREADY and others, Appellants, *v.* GOLDSMITH and others.

18 H. 89.

ADMIRALTY—CARELESSNESS BY REASON OF GREAT SPEED IN A FOG.

1. It is satisfactory evidence of gross carelessness, that a large steamer is proved to have proceeded down Long Island Sound, in the direct track of the coasting trade, at the rate of sixteen miles an hour, of a foggy morning; and she must be held responsible for damages to a sailing vessel at anchor, run down by her under such circumstances.
2. There was not sufficient evidence in this case to establish a uniform usage for vessels lying at anchor in a fog to blow a fog-horn, and the vessel is not at fault for omitting this, as well as beating empty barrels to make a noise.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the southern district of New York.

The suit was originally brought in the admiralty jurisdiction of the district court, by the owners of the schooner *Oriana*, against the steamer *Bay State*, for a collision; and the district court held both vessels in fault, and made a decree based on this, dividing the losses.

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This was reversed on appeal to the circuit court, which decreed that the steamer was liable for all the damages growing out of the collision; and from this latter decree the case is brought to this court on appeal. Being a question mainly of facts, they are stated very fully in the opinion.

*Mr. Lord*, for appellants.

*Mr. Cutting*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 90 ]

This is an appeal in admiralty, in a case of collision, from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the southern district of New York.

The collision occurred on Long Island Sound, off Watch Hill light, on the Connecticut shore, between the schooner Oriana and the steamer Bay State, on the 13th of August, 1847, when the former was run down and sunk. The schooner was laden with coal, and on her way to New Bedford. The steamer was engaged in one of her usual trips from Fall River, through the Sound, to the city of New York. On the morning of the accident the weather was thick and foggy, and so dark that a vessel could not be seen over two or three hundred feet off, and the wind at a dead calm. The schooner lay helpless on the water.

The steamer is a large vessel, some sixteen hundred tons burden, with powerful engines, and of great speed, and was coming down the Sound at the time at the rate of sixteen or seventeen miles the hour. The hands on board the schooner heard the noise of her paddle-wheels before she appeared in sight; she was within less than her length when they could first discern her; and she had approached within that distance of the schooner before that vessel was discerned by the hands on board the steamer.

The place where this collision occurred is in the direct track of the coasting trade between the Eastern States, New York, and Pennsylvania, and where the waters are greatly frequented by vessels engaged in it.

We agree, that it is not for this court to lay down any fixed and inflexible rule as it respects the rate of speed of steam vessels navigating these waters. This must depend upon the circumstances attending each particular case. These may justify a rate deemed prudent navigation at one time that would be wholly unjustifiable at another. But we feel no difficulty in \*saying [ \* 91 ] that, in a case circumstanced as the present one, a fog so

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The Bay State.

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dense that the most vigilant look-out would be unable to discern a vessel at a distance of more than sixty or one hundred yards—navigating, at the time, waters frequented with sailing vessels—a rate of sixteen or seventeen miles the hour is altogether inadmissible as prudent or reasonably safe navigation. According to the testimony of the pilot, it would take four or five minutes to stop The Bay State at this rate of speed; at a reduced rate, it would of course take a proportionably less time. This, in addition to the better opportunity for each vessel approaching to adopt the proper manœuvre to avoid the collision, should admonish those engaged in navigating vessels of this description, of the propriety, if not necessity, of slacking their speed in thick weather, and especially in a track where other water craft are usually to be met.

Some of the officers on board this steamer, as is apparent from the evidence, were laboring under a very imperfect appreciation of their whole duty as regarded her proper navigation.

A passenger on board, who witnessed the collision, was struck with the impropriety of the rate of speed, and asked why they ran so fast in a fog, and was answered that it was necessary, in order to enable them to keep their reckoning in going from place to place. And we learn also from the testimony of the pilot and some others, that they make no difference in the rate of speed in consequence of a fog; that they go slow when making land, or a light, or in narrow passages, and when sounding the lead, as if the only precautions they were bound to observe in the navigation were as it respected the safety of their own vessel.

We will only repeat what we said in the case of *Newton v. Stebins*, 10 How. 606: "That it may be matter of convenience that steam vessels should proceed with great rapidity; but the law will not justify them in proceeding with such rapidity, if the property and lives of other persons are thereby endangered."

We are all satisfied that this vessel was grossly in fault, on account of the rate of speed with which she was moving, under the circumstances, at the time of the collision.

The remaining question is, whether or not the schooner was also in fault. And this, in the present case, depends upon another, namely, whether she omitted any precautionary measures which she was bound to observe under the circumstances, such as beating empty casks or blowing a fog-horn, with a view to give notice, to vessels approaching, of her position.

A good many witnesses have been examined as to the usage of vessels navigating the Sound, in respect to the blowing of horns, beating of empty barrels, and the like, in thick and foggy

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\* weather; but, on looking carefully into the testimony, [ \* 92 ] it will be found that no such general or established usage has been proved.

The evidence of most of the experienced masters who have been examined goes to disprove the prevalence of any such usage. The practice is occasionally resorted to in the navigation of the Sound, but with what advantage or security against accidents does not distinctly appear. Without much more evidence of the usage, and of its utility in preventing collisions, than is shown in this case, we cannot say that the omission to comply with it is of itself chargeable as a fault against the schooner. It may well be, that the use of these means should be entitled to consideration upon a nice question of proper vigilance and caution, in a case of collision between two vessels, like any other precautionary measure that might tend to prevent its occurrence. Beyond this, we do not think the evidence as disclosed in the case would justify us in carrying the effect of the omission.

Besides, we are not satisfied, upon the evidence, that the precautionary measure of blowing horns, or ringing a fog-bell, would have been of any avail under the circumstances of this case. The witnesses on the part of the steamer agree that the noise of the motion of the vessel in the water is so great that it could be heard at a much further distance than their own fog-bell; and several of them consider the bell useless for this reason; and one of them states expressly that he did not recollect ever hearing a horn while on a steamboat when she was under way, but had after she stopped. A horn, it is said by some of the witnesses, cannot be heard, at the furthest, over a mile and a half; and if so, it certainly could not be heard anything like that distance, if at all, on board a steamboat in motion. The steamer, as we have seen, was moving at a rate of more than a mile in four minutes; and taking into view the size of The Bay State, with her powerful engines, together with this rate of speed, it is quite apparent that if a horn could have been heard at all, it could not, upon any reasonable conclusion, in time to have materially influenced the result.

We are satisfied the decree of the court below is right, and should be affirmed.

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United States v. Jones.

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THE UNITED STATES, Plaintiffs in Error, v. CATESBY AP. ROGER JONES.

18 H. 92.

RELATIVE POWERS OF THE SECRETARIES OF THE DEPARTMENTS AND THE ACCOUNTING OFFICERS OF THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

The act of the secretary of the navy, in transmitting a sum of money (\$1,000) to an officer of the navy in Paris, to be expended in payment for medicine and medical attendance on himself, cannot be revised by the comptroller of the treasury so as to charge the officer with the same.

THE case is sufficiently stated in the opinion of the court and the dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice DANIEL.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the plaintiff.

*Mr. Carlisle* and *Mr. Jones*, for defendant.

[ \* 94 ] \* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

The action in this case is for money had and received by the defendant, Jones. It was entered amicably, and submitted on a case stated.

The defendant is a lieutenant in the navy of the United States. In December, 1851, he was in Paris, on leave of absence, and was severely and dangerously wounded by accident, during the emeute or revolutionary outbreak in that month. In July, 1852, he was placed by the secretary of the navy on special duty, for the collection of information relative to the steam navy of France. Afterwards, in August, 1852, the sum of one thousand dollars was transmitted to him by the secretary of the navy, with orders to apply it "to discharge the expenses attending the injuries received by him in Paris." It is admitted that this money was disbursed according to the orders of the secretary. The accounting officers of the treasury have charged the amount so disbursed by the defendant against him on his pay account, "and have refused to recognize the authority of the secretary of the navy in the premises."

The reason alleged for this refusal by the accounting officer is, that by his construction of the second section of the act of 3d of March, 1835, c. 27, the secretary of the navy had no author-

[ \* 95 ] ity to make such appropriation of the funds of the \* government in his hands. The act, so far as it is material, is in these words: "That the yearly allowance provided in this act is all the pay, compensation, and allowance which shall be received under any circumstances whatever by any such officer," &c.



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Notwithstanding an opinion of a late attorney general to the contrary, the accounting officer "entertains no doubt" that the expenses attending the medical treatment of a sick and disabled officer or seaman are among the "allowances" prohibited by this act, and has consequently felt bound to repudiate the secretary's construction of the law, and his opinion as to the powers and duties of his department.

For the purposes of this case, however, it will not be necessary for the court to decide between these discordant opinions as to what things come within the category of "allowances," according to the true intent and meaning of the act of congress.

It is the peculiar province and duty of the navy department to provide medical stores and attendance for the officers and seamen attached to that service. It may truly be said, also, to enter into the contract of the government with persons so employed by them. For this purpose a bureau of medicine is attached to this department, and numerous medical officers appointed. The law, moreover, exacts from every officer and seaman a monthly contribution from their wages to make provision for the sick and disabled. These contributions are applied, under the supervision of the president, to the erection and maintenance of marine hospitals, and similar institutions for the benefit of seamen.

The exigencies of the service often require the employment of soldiers and sailors at a distance from public hospitals, and when the attendance of the medical officers cannot be obtained; or, consequently, in fulfillment of the humane policy of the government, it frequently becomes necessary to employ temporarily physicians not regularly commissioned. For in this way alone can the department perform the duty assumed by the government of providing the necessary medical attendance for those who become sick or disabled in its service. The executive department of the government, to which is intrusted the control of the subject-matter, must necessarily determine all questions appertaining to the employment and payment of such temporary agents, and the exigency which demands their employment. The secretary of the navy represents the president, and exercises his power on the subjects confided to his department. He is responsible to the people and the law for any abuse of the powers intrusted to him. His acts and decisions on subjects submitted to his jurisdiction and control by the constitution and laws, do not require the approval of any officer of \* another department to make them valid [ \* 96 ] and conclusive. The accounting officers of the treasury have not the burden of responsibility cast upon them of revising

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the judgments, correcting the supposed mistakes, or annulling the orders of the heads of departments.

In the case before us, the defendant has not come before the accounting officers of the treasury, claiming from the government an "allowance" for medical attendance while on leave of absence, and submitting to these officers the propriety and legality of such "allowance." On the contrary, the agreed case shows that a sum of money had been transmitted to the defendant by the secretary of the navy to be disbursed, and that he had disbursed it according to his orders; and whether it was for paying for services acknowledged by the secretary to have been rendered to the government for medical attendance on the defendant himself, or on another, could make no difference. The liability of the defendant to refund this money to the government is founded on the act of the accounting officer charging him with it, because, in his opinion, the secretary of the navy had mistaken the law or abused his discretion.

We are of opinion that he was not bound to assume this responsibility.

The propriety of detaching the defendant on special duty in France, of furnishing him with medical attendance while so employed, and of adopting and ratifying his act in the employment of such physician, under all the circumstances, are all subjects peculiarly within the jurisdiction and discretion of the head of the navy department, and not subject to revision or correction by the officers of any other department.

The judgment of the circuit court is therefore affirmed.

Mr. Justice CATRON, and Mr. Justice DANIEL, dissented.

Mr. Justice DANIEL. I am unable to concur in the opinion of the court just pronounced in this cause, for the reason that this opinion, upon mere assumed and hypothetical considerations of hardship or motives by which the legislature may have been influenced, undertakes directly to contravene, and in reality to annul a law, than which there is not one more clear or more positive in its provisions to be found upon the statute book.

With respect to considerations of hardship in the operation of a positive law, or of the motives of those by whom it has been enacted, I can, in expounding its provisions, assume no power which is legitimate; those are subjects exclusively within the province of the lawmakers, and to them it belongs to control them.

[ \* 97 ] \* The statute here referred to as being affected by the opinion in this case, is that bearing date on the 3d of

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March, 1835, (4 Stats. at Large, 755, 757,) regulating the pay of the navy of the United States.

If it were by me deemed regular to seek for the objects of congress in the changes by this law of the provisions of previous statutes, those objects might perhaps be correctly inferred from the fact that, by the law of 1835 now under consideration, the compensation previously made to officers of the navy was in many, if not in every instance, at least doubted. But I deem it proper to confine myself to the language of the statute of 1835; and to expound its clear and unambiguous terms without reference to anything *dehors* those terms, and especially freed from any rule of interpretation so uncertain as mere conjecture.

By this law, after regulating the pay of naval officers of every grade, it is declared, section 2: "That no allowance shall hereafter be made to any officer in the naval service of the United States, for drawing bills, for receiving or disbursing money, or transacting any business for the government of the United States, nor shall he be allowed servants, or pay for servants, or clothing, or rations for them, or pay for the same, nor shall any allowance be made to him for rent of quarters, or to pay rent for furniture, or for lights or fuel, or transporting baggage." After the above enumeration, comprehensive as it is, we find in the law the following exclusion of any and every allowance which might be claimed, upon the ground of its having been omitted in the enumeration preceding it: "It is hereby expressly declared, that the yearly allowances provided by this act, is all the pay, compensation, and allowance that shall be received, under any circumstances whatsoever, by any such officer or person, except for travelling expenses when under orders, for which ten cents per mile shall be allowed."

That the officers of the navy were cognizant of the mandate of this law, must be presumed; but, in addition to this legitimate conclusion, it is known as an historical fact in the public administration of the government, that, by a circular addressed to them, they were severally informed of the provisions of the law; besides which, they must unavoidably have learned them by every settlement for their pay at the treasury.

How, then, it can be possible to escape from the comprehensive language of the statute, which may well be styled "the exclusion of every conclusion" in favor of the claim by Lieutenant Jones, it passes my power to perceive. It will not be pretended by any one, that the advance made to him was a portion of his yearly pay, yet the statute declares that the yearly pay shall be "all the pay, compensation, and allowance that \* shall be received [ \* 98 ]

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by any such officer or other person, under any circumstances whatsoever, except for travelling expenses, for which ten cents per mile may be allowed."

Surely the phrase, "under any circumstances whatsoever," is broad enough to comprehend any casualty to which any person may be exposed.

But it has been alleged, in excuse for the retention of this money by Lieutenant Jones, that there was no naval surgeon in Paris, and that the money was advanced by the secretary of the navy. To the first part of this apology it is a sufficient reply to state: first, that the statute has declared the pay of the officer to be a sufficient allowance under all circumstances whatsoever, and, therefore, under the circumstances of this case, no allowance beyond that graduated by the law itself could properly be claimed; second, that the government could be under no conceivable obligation, even independently of the express exclusion of the law, to provide medical or surgical attendance to wait upon an officer off duty, and not necessarily exposed to any of the perils of duty; that had Lieutenant Jones been on duty, he would have been attended by a portion of the medical staff, and been, if in reach of them, entitled to the benefit of the naval hospitals; and thus, under the regular usages of the service, been supplied with those aids for which the law and the usages of the service has made provision. Every one can perceive the danger of abuse attendant on a practice, by an officer, of employing a surgeon or physician, *ad libitum*, to attend him when off duty, and to charge the expense of such employment to the government as a legitimate allowance to the officer when off duty.

It is no excuse for an irregularity like this to say, that where troops or vessels are employed on distant service there may be resort to medical or surgical aid; in such an instance, the persons called in would be engaged for the army, the fleet, or the corps generally, at regulated rates, and the account for such services would be settled and certified in conformity with such rules or rates; but an instance of this kind, justified by necessity alone, and conducted by rule, can bear no similitude to the advance, without authority of law or usage, of a round sum of money to one whose compensation had already been provided, and to be expended by him according to his own tastes or ideas, without known regard to any other criterion, and to be accounted for to nobody.

The secretary of the navy had no authority of law for making the advance in question. It was not within the provisions of the law for the creation and application of the hospital fund. That fund, by the law which created it, is to be applied to objects and in

modes designated, and the present instance falls not within either of the directions of the law.

\* But it has been insisted that the secretary of the navy, [ \* 99 ] having ordered the payment of this money, the subordinate or beneficiary cannot be called on for reimbursement; first, because the payment having been voluntarily made by the government, the money could not be recovered back upon the rules governing actions for money had and received; and, secondly, that the secretary himself, if any one, and not his subordinates, should be made accountable. These two excuses do not appear to be altogether consistent; for if the money was paid under a competent authority, and with full knowledge and in good faith, there could be no recovery on any account. But it is denied that the secretary had the power to make the payment or advance, or that he can be looked upon as being the government, or in any respect as being identified with the government, except so far as he is acting within his regular constitutional and legal sphere. To hold the converse of this, would be to justify the most irregular and flagrant abuses, and to cover them with the excuse that they were the acts of the government itself which had been wronged.

Well, then, with respect to any protection which can be extended to the recipient of this money, upon the mere ground that it was paid to him under an order from the secretary of the navy. The officers of the navy must, like all others, be presumed to be cognizant of the law. If, then, with this necessary imputation of knowledge, an officer, either through the ignorance, or carelessness, or mistake, or connivance of the agent of the government, get possession of and apply to his own advantage the funds of that government, and seek to protect himself by alleging a voluntary payment to him, such a defense would seem to be warranted neither by law, nor equity, nor good faith.

Again, it has been insisted that the sum of money having been advanced by direction of the secretary of the navy, the auditor, by whom, according to law, the accounts of Lieutenant Jones were to be settled, could have no right to question the legality or regularity of such advance, or to charge it to the officer who had used it; and this position seems to be rested upon the naked position that the auditor, being subordinate to the secretary of the navy, has no right or power to examine into his acts, although such are necessarily complicated or connected with the actings and doings of those transactions the law requires him to examine and adjust. To such a rule of proceeding as this, I can by no means subscribe. I know of no rule of subordination which can justify, much less demand, a de-

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parture from the law, or from integrity, in obedience merely to the fact of inferiority in the gradation of place. Each and every officer has his duties to perform, and is bound to their performance [ \* 100 ] with independence and good faith; and no matter whose acts may be brought before him, whether those of his immediate superior or one much higher in power, he is bound to bring them all to the test of the law, and to pronounce upon all, from the greatest to the least, by one inflexible rule, the rule of duty; and surely, when an appeal is made to tribunals of justice, they should recognize no standard but that of the law itself.

My opinion is, that the decision of the circuit court should be reversed, and judgment entered for the plaintiffs.

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UNITED STATES, for use of JAMES MACKY *et al.*, Plaintiffs in Error,  
v. RICHARD S. COXE.

18. H. 100.

STATUS OF CHEROKEE NATION, AND THE EFFECT GIVEN TO THEIR LOCAL LAWS IN  
COURTS OF THE UNITED STATES—ADMINISTRATION, &c.

1. The Cherokee nation is not a foreign nation, but in its semi-civilized state bears a close analogy to a provisional government of a territorial character.
2. The courts will respect their laws concerning property, its descent, and administration of estates, and give effect to them; therefore administrators appointed under their authority could make a valid power of attorney to receive money due to the estate from the United States.
3. Although an executor or administrator cannot sue in a foreign jurisdiction, yet he may lawfully receive a debt due the decedent, and voluntarily paid in another State, and the payment will discharge the debt.
4. The agent, by power of attorney of the administrator in the Cherokee courts, took out administration in the District of Columbia, to receive of the United States a sum due to the decedent's estate. He then, as attorney for plaintiffs, the original administrators, receipted to himself as administrator here on the money so received. Held, that as he was entitled to receive it, both as agent and as administrator, his sureties on the administration bond were no longer liable for the amount received by him.
5. CURTIS and NELSON. Held, that the suit could not be maintained, because no order for distribution or payment had been made by the probate court of the District of Columbia.

THE case is on a writ of error to the circuit court of the District of Columbia, and is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Chilton*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Carlisle and Mr. Bradley*, for defendant.



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Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the circuit court for the District of Columbia.

The action was brought against the defendant as surety in the administration bond of Austin J. Raines, administrator of Samuel Mackey, late of the Cherokee nation.

Raines received from James Mackey, Joseph Talley, and Preston T. Mackey, as administrators of Samuel Mackey, deceased, a power of attorney for them and in their names to petition the congress of the United States to settle and release the claim of the United States against the said Samuel Mackey, deceased, as principal, and John Drenner, Lewis Evans, and Hiro T. Wilson, as securities; and after the passage of any law in \* relation to said claim [ \* 101 ] by congress, to receive all moneys that may be due the estate of the said Mackey, deceased, from the treasurer of the United States, and full receipts, acquittances, and relinquishments thereof to make in their name; and further, to adjust and settle with the treasurer of the United States, or other officers of the government, all other claims of said Mackey against the United States, and to receive all moneys due from the United States to said Mackey on any account whatever.

Raines came to Washington and procured a settlement of the accounts between the government and Samuel Mackey, deceased; but the treasury department refused to pay him the balance due Mackey upon the power of attorney, and required him to take out letters of administration. He thereupon applied to the orphans' court of the county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, for letters of administration, which were granted upon his executing bond, with the defendant and James Reeside as sureties. He then received from the treasury the sum of \$10,513.05, out of which he paid the expense of administration, and for the balance he executed the following receipt:

"7th July, 1841. Received of Austin J. Raines, administrator of Samuel Mackey, deceased, the sum of ten thousand five hundred and thirteen dollars and five cents, being the amount due to the representatives next of kin and distributees of said Samuel Mackey, from said administrator.

Signed,

JAMES MACKAY,  
JOSEPH TALLEY,  
PRESTON T. MACKAY.

By their attorney in fact, A. J. RAINES."

Reeside, the co-obligor in the administration bond, having died several years ago, the process was served only on the defendant.



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The declaration contained several counts, stating that the said Samuel Mackey died intestate, leaving Sarah Mackey, his widow, and James Mackey, Preston T. Mackey, William Mackey, George Mackey, Nancy Talley, wife of Joseph Talley, and Corine Mackey, all being citizens of the Cherokee nation, and that, by the laws of said Cherokee nation, the widow and children were distributees of the deceased.

The defendant filed a general plea of performance, on which issue was joined.

On the trial before the jury, among other prayers for instruction was the following: "If the jury find from the evidence that Austin J. Raines, as administrator of Samuel Mackey, deceased, received from the treasury of the United States the sum of \$10,513.05, and after deducting the expenses of administration there re- [ \* 102 ] mained in his hands the clear sum of \$10,505.20½, \* and no debts of said deceased are shown payable by said administrator; and James Mackey, Joseph Talley, and Preston T. Mackey were the original administrators of said Samuel Mackey, under the laws of the Cherokee nation, the burden of proof is on the defendant to show that said Raines paid said sum of \$10,505.20½ to said James Mackey, Joseph Talley, and Preston T. Mackey, or the survivors of them; and although the jury may find that the paper offered in evidence, purporting to be a power of attorney from said James Mackey, Joseph Talley, and Preston T. Mackey to said Raines is genuine, yet the said Raines had no authority to receipt for said parties by himself, as their attorney in fact, to himself as administrator, and that such receipt is not a payment by him as administrator of said parties; and unless such payment be proved otherwise than by such receipt, the said Raines has not performed the condition of this bond as administrator of Samuel Mackey, and the said defendant is liable in this action to the said James Mackey, Joseph Talley, and Preston T. Mackey, or the survivors of them, for the said sum of \$10,505.20½, with interest thereon from the date when the same was received;" which instruction was refused, and to which an exception was taken.

There were other exceptions, but this one presents the material points in the case.

By the treaty made between the United States and the Cherokee nation, dated March 14, 1835, in article 5, the United States covenanted and agreed that "the lands ceded to the Cherokee nation in the foregoing article shall, in no future time, without their consent, be included within the territorial limits or jurisdiction of any State or territory. But they shall secure to the Cherokee nation the right

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of their national councils to make and carry into effect all such laws as they may deem necessary for the government and protection of the persons and property within their own country belonging to their people, or such persons as have connected themselves with them: provided always, that they shall not be inconsistent with the constitution of the United States, and such acts of congress as have been or may be passed regulating trade and intercourse with the Indians," &c.

The Cherokees are governed by their own laws. As a people, they are more advanced in civilization than the other Indian tribes, with the exception perhaps of the Choctaws. By the national council their laws are enacted, approved by their executive, and carried into effect through an organized judiciary. Under a law "relative to estates and administrators," letters of administration were granted to the persons above named on the estate of Samuel Mackey, deceased, by the probate court, with \* as much [ \* 103 ] regularity and responsibilities as letters of administration are granted by the State courts of the Union.

This organization is not only under the sanction of the general government, but it guarantees their independence, subject to the restriction that their laws shall be consistent with the constitution of the United States, and acts of congress which regulate trade and intercourse with the Indians. And whenever congress shall make provision on the subject, the Cherokee nation shall be entitled to a delegate in the national legislature.

It is refreshing to see the surviving remnants of the races which once inhabited and roamed over this vast country as their hunting-grounds, and as the undisputed proprietors of the soil, exchanging their erratic habits for the blessings of civilization.

A question has been suggested whether the Cherokee people should be considered and treated as a foreign state or territory. The fact that they are under the constitution of the Union, and subject to acts of congress regulating trade, is a sufficient answer to the suggestion. They are not only within our jurisdiction, but the faith of the nation is pledged for their protection. In some respects they bear the same relation to the federal government as a territory did in its second grade of government, under the ordinance of 1787. Such territory passed its own laws, subject to the approval of congress, and its inhabitants were subject to the constitution and acts of congress. The principal difference consists in the fact that the Cherokees enact their own laws, under the restriction stated, appoint their own officers, and pay their own expenses. This, however, is no reason why the laws and proceed-

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ings of the Cherokee territory, so far as relates to rights claimed under them, should not be placed upon the same footing as other territories in the Union. It is not a foreign, but a domestic territory—a territory which originated under our constitution and laws.

By the 11th section of the act of 24th of June, 1812, it is provided “that it shall be lawful for any person or persons to whom letters testamentary or of administration hath been or may hereafter be granted, by the proper authority in any of the United States or the territories thereof, to maintain any suit or action, and to prosecute and recover any claim in the District of Columbia, in the same manner as if the letters testamentary or administration had been granted in the District. Under this law the money due to Mackey might have been paid, and, indeed, should have been paid, to Raines, the attorney in fact of the administrators of Mackey. But, through abundant caution, letters of administration were required to be taken out in this District, as a prerequisite to the payment of the money by the treasury department.

[ \* 104 ] \* No question could arise as to the validity of the Cherokee law under which letters of administration were granted on the estate of Mackey, and as the power of attorney given by the administrators to Raines seems to have been duly authenticated and proved, a payment to the administrator, by the government, would have been a legal payment. The Cherokee country, we think, may be considered a territory of the United States, within the act of 1812. In no respect can it be considered a foreign state or territory, as it is within our jurisdiction and subject to our laws.

Although an executor or administrator cannot sue in a foreign court, in virtue of his original letters of administration, yet he may lawfully, under that administration, receive a debt voluntarily paid in any other State. *Stevens v. Gaylord*, 11 Mass. R. 256. In *Doolittle v. Lewis*, 7 John. Ch. 49, Chancellor Kent held, that a voluntary payment to a foreign executor or administrator was a good discharge of the debt. *Shultz v. Pulver*, 3 Paige, 182; *Hooker v. Olmstead*, 6 Pick. 481.

This suit is brought in the name of the surviving administrators of Mackey and of the distributees. Regularly, an action by the distributees could not be sustained, unless an application had been made to the orphans' court in this District to order a distribution, and authorize or direct the administrator, Raines, to pay the same. This administration being ancillary to that of the domicile of the deceased, the distribution would be governed by the law of the domicile.

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There appears to have been no creditors of the estate of Mackey in the District of Columbia, and letters of administration were obtained here, as necessary under the decision of the treasury department. This object being accomplished, and the costs of the administration paid, Raines, as agent of the administrators of the domicile, receipted for the money in their behalf, under the power of attorney from the administrators. And the question arises, whether this discharges the defendant as surety on the administration bond of Raines.

Under the power of attorney he was authorized to receive all moneys that may be due the estate of Mackey from the treasurer of the United States, and receipt for the same. He received and receipted for the money as administrator in this District, and then executed a receipt to himself as agent, under the power of attorney as agent for the administrators.

Under the circumstances, it would be a hardship fraught with injustice, to hold the defendant liable as surety on the administration bond. Raines was the confidential agent of the administrators of Mackey—the money was placed in his hands, under full authority to receive it. It has never been paid over, \* it is said, by reason of the bursting of a boiler, by [ \* 105 ] which Raines lost his life and the money which he had received. But whether this be true or not, the money went into the hands of Raines, who was the agent of the administrators, duly authorized to receive it; and we think, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the defendant was thereby discharged. Whether for the payment of creditors or distribution among the heirs, the domicile of the deceased was the place to which the money should be transmitted. It would add to the conditions of the administration bond, to hold the defendant responsible for the safe transmission of the money, after it was placed in the hands of the agent of the administrators.

Had the receipt of Raines been duly filed and acted upon in the court of probate, his surety on his administration bond would have been discharged. The action of the probate court only is wanting, but we think such action was not essential, and that the equity of the case is equally clear without it. The parties are estopped from denying the agency of Raines.

In *Vaughan v. Northup et al.*, 15 Pet. 6, this court say: "The debts due from the government of the United States have no locality at the seat of government. The United States, in their sovereign capacity, have no particular place of domicile, but possess in contemplation of law an ubiquity throughout the Union; and the

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debts due by them are not to be treated like the debts of a private debtor, which constitute local assets in his own domicile. On the contrary, the administrator of a creditor of the government, duly appointed in the State where he was domiciled at the time of his death, has full authority to receive payment, and give a full discharge, of the debt due to his intestate, in any place where the government may choose to pay it."

We think there is no error in the ruling of the court, and the judgment of the circuit court is therefore affirmed.

Justices NELSON and CURTIS stated that they concurred in the decision of the court to affirm the judgment of the circuit court, upon the ground that as no final account had been settled by the administrator in the orphans' court, and no order had been made by that court, either directing the administrator to pay the balance in his hands to the principal administrators, for distribution by them, or directing a distribution to be made here, there was no breach of the bond. That this being an ancillary administration, it depended upon the discretion of the orphans' court, which granted it, whether the money remaining in the hands of the ancillary administrator, after the satisfaction of all claims in this jurisdiction, should be distributed here by the ancillary administrator, or remitted to the principal administrators for distribution; and [ \* 106 ] until that discretion shall be exercised, \* and the ancillary administrator directed which of these courses to pursue, he is in no default, and his surety is not liable.

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RICHARD H. SESSIONS, DANIEL H. SESSIONS, and SANDFORD C. FAULKNER, Appellants, v. JOHN M. PINTARD.

18 H. 106.

LIABILITY ON APPEAL BOND.

From a decree against G. for \$10,552, with an order to sell land in satisfaction of it, G. appealed, and plaintiffs were his sureties on an appeal bond. The decree was affirmed, and the land sold for \$8,025, leaving unpaid of the decree and interest, \$7,525. Plaintiffs claim that the sum realized on the sale of land should be applied *pro rata* on the original decree and the penalty of the bond, which was \$12,000. Held by the court that they were not entitled to such apportionment, but were bound for all the amount of the original decree, interest and costs, not paid by the sale of the land, if that sum did not exceed the penalty of their bond.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the eastern district of Arkansas.

The case is the sequel of *Goodloe's Administrator v. Pintard*, in this court, reported in 12 How. 24; 19 Curtis, 15; and all that is

necessary to understand the decision is stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Pike*, for appellants.

*Mr. Carlisle* and *Mr. Crittenden*, for appellee.

\* *Mr. Justice McLEAN* delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 107 ]

This is an appeal from the circuit court of the eastern district of Arkansas.

Pintard, on the 10th of April, 1847, obtained a decree against Archibald Goodloe for \$10,552, with ten per cent. interest per annum on the amount decreed. There was also an order that a certain tract of land should be sold and the proceeds applied to the payment of the decree.

An appeal was taken from this decree to this court, by which the decree was affirmed. On the 20th of February, 1852, Pintard commenced an action against Sessions and others on the appeal bond, and at April term, 1853, obtained a judgment on the bond for the penalty thereof, amounting to the sum of \$12,000.

At the same time Pintard procured an order for the sale of the land specified in the decree, which was sold on the 15th of November, 1852, for the sum of \$8,025, which, after paying the expense of the sale, left a balance of \$7,525 as a credit on said decree, as of the 15th of November, 1852. The interest, with the sum decreed, up to that period amounted to \$16,877. The proceeds of the sale of the land being deducted from this sum, leaves a balance on the decree of \$8,912, with interest from the 17th day of April, 1853. The interest on this sum, up to the time judgment was rendered on the appeal bond, makes the sum of \$9,283, as the amount to be collected on the judgment.

An execution was issued on the judgment the 14th of May, 1853, for \$12,000, with an indorsement of a credit of \$2,717. This execution was levied on a number of slaves, of the value of \$12,000, as the property of Sessions, the defendant. A delivery bond was taken for the slaves, with Daniel H. Sessions as security; but the slaves not being delivered on the day of the sale, an execution was issued against principal and surety on the delivery bond.

At this stage of the proceedings a bill was filed by the appellants, complaining that the distribution which had been made  
\* of the proceeds of the sale of the land was inequitable, [ \* 108 ]  
and that such proceeds should be credited on the judgment entered upon the appeal bond, *pro rata*, and not exclusively on the decree; and the complainants pray that Pintard may be decreed to



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enter a credit upon the judgment as aforesaid, as of its date, for the sum of \$5,323.35; and that a perpetual injunction might be granted to prevent him from collecting any more than the residue of the judgment, after deducting the above sum.

A temporary injunction was granted, Pintard filed his answer, and upon the final hearing the injunction was dissolved and the bill dismissed at the costs of the complainants. From this decree an appeal was taken, and that brings the case before us.

The complainants in their bill allege no fraud nor mistake as a ground of relief. They claim that the money received under the decree for the sale of the land shall be applied, *pro rata*, in the discharge of the judgment against them, and the balance of the decree which remains after deducting the judgment. This would give to them a credit on the judgment of \$5,724; and that Pintard, in claiming the whole amount of the judgment, seeks to recover from them \$3,568.99 more than in equity he is entitled to.

This claim of the appellants rests upon the ground that there was a lien on the land sold by the original decree, which operated as an inducement to them to become sureties on the appeal bond. The land, by the original decree, was directed to be sold; consequently the proceeds of the sale could be applied only in discharge of the decree. On what ground could the appellants claim a *pro rata* distribution of this fund? They were bound to the extent of the penalty of their bond, on which a judgment was entered. They had a direct interest in the application of the proceeds of the land to the payment of the original decree, including the interest and costs; and so much as such payment reduced the original decree below the amount of the judgment against them, they were entitled to a credit on the judgment. The judgment has been so made, and the credit entered, and beyond this they have no claim, either equitable or legal.

In the argument, a subrogation of the land or its proceeds, for the benefit of complainants, is urged; but on what known principle of equity does not satisfactorily appear. Had the appellants paid the decree in full, they might have claimed a control over the land decreed to be sold, or its proceeds. They made no payment, but assert a general equity to have the fund applied, *pro rata*, on their judgment. This would leave a large amount of the original decree unsatisfied. On what ground could Pintard be [ \* 109 ] subjected to such a loss? He looked to the land and \* the surety on the appeal bond, which more than covered his decree, including interest and cost.

The condition of the appeal bond was, "for the prosecution of



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said appeal to effect, and to answer all damages and costs, if'' there should be a failure to make the plea good in the supreme court. There was a failure to do this, and the penalty of the bond was incurred. Whatever hardship may be in this case is common to all sureties who incur responsibility and have money to pay. Beyond that of a faithful application of the proceeds of the land in payment of the decree, the appellants have no equity. They cannot place themselves in the relation of two creditors having claims on a common fund, which may be distributed *pro rata* between them. Pintard has a claim on both funds; first, on the proceeds of the land, and second, on the judgment entered on the appeal bond for the satisfaction of the original decree.

The decree of the circuit court is affirmed, with costs.

18h	109
L-ed	280
130	625

LOUIS CURTIS and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. THERESE PETITPAIN and others.

18 H. 109.

PRACTICE—JURISDICTION.

1. A record which contains only an agreed statement of facts, and the judgment of the court thereon, is not a compliance with the rules of this court, numbers 11 and 31, on that subject.
2. A judgment rendered against a marshal, on a rule to show cause why he should not pay money in his hands to another party, and a counter rule in favor of the plaintiff under whose process it was seized, is not such a judgment as this court can re-examine. *Bayard v. Lombard*, 9 How. 530; 18 Curtis, 252.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana. The case is stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Taylor*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for defendants.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

The record certified in this cause consists of "an agreed \*statement of facts," which the parties submitted to the [\* 110] court on the rules taken by the plaintiffs against the defendants, and the judgment rendered thereon, and a judgment rendered on a motion for a new trial, being the proceedings after the submission of the case.

The case stated is, that the plaintiffs recovered a judgment against Victor Feste in the circuit court of the United States. That an

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Jecker v. Montgomery.

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execution issued thereon, and a seizure was made of immovable as well as movable property; which was sold, and the proceeds held by the marshal.

While these proceedings were pending, Madame Feste recovered, in one of the state courts, a decree against her husband, Victor Feste, for the separation of property and the amount of dowry brought in marriage; and thereupon served a notice upon the marshal, claiming to have satisfaction of her legal mortgage, in preference to the execution creditor, from the moneys in his hands, and obtained a rule from the court requiring him to answer her claim. The plaintiffs, upon their part, (as the case states,) also obtained a rule, to enforce the payment of the money to them on their execution. To settle these conflicting claims was the object of the agreed case thus submitted to the court.

Two questions arise *in limine*, either of which is, in our opinion, decisive of this cause: 1st. That this is not such a transcript as will satisfy the 11th and 31st rules of this court, under the decision of *Keene v. Whittaker*, 13 Pet. 459; and, 2d, that this is not such a judgment as this court can re-examine, according to the principle of *Bayard v. Lombard*, 9 How. 530. And we agree with the defendants upon both these questions.

The cause is dismissed with costs.

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JECKER and others, Appellants, v. JOHN B. MONTGOMÉRY.

18 H. 110.

ADMIRALTY—PRIZE—TRADING WITH ENEMY.

1. The rule is inflexible that trade between citizens or subjects of nations at war is forbidden, and property captured on the high seas intended for an enemy's port is lawful prize.
2. Nor can this forfeiture be evaded by stopping at an intermediate port.
3. While it is the duty of a captor to send his prize into a port of his own nation for adjudication, there are circumstances which will excuse this, and authorize a court to proceed to adjudicate and condemn, without possession of the vessel or property seized as prize.
4. That the captor was in command of a squadron at a great distance from his own country, and could not have spared a prize crew and officer without improperly weakening his force, is sufficient cause.
5. Under such circumstances the capturing commander must of necessity be the judge of the circumstances which justify his failure to send in his prize; and while his decision is not conclusive on the court, it will inquire whether he has exercised reasonable judgment and discretion in the matter.
6. While it is certainly the rule in prize cases that proceedings should be conducted in the name of the United States, the decree will not be reversed when they have been

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conducted in the name of the captors, through the course of a long litigation, without objection on that score until the case is argued in this court.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the District of Columbia; and the case arises from the libel filed under the intimation of this court in the case of *Jecker v. Montgomery*, reported in 13 How. 498; 19 Curtis, 615.

All that is necessary to understand the points now ruled is found in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Coxe and Mr. Nelson*, for appellants.

*Mr. Key and Mr. Johnson*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice DANIEL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 111 ]

This is an appeal from a decree in admiralty by the circuit court of the United States for the District of Columbia, by which decree the ship *Admittance*, claimed by the appellants, Charles B. Fessenden and Richard S. Fay, as owners, and the cargo of the same ship claimed by the appellants, Jecker, Torre and Co. and Manual Quintana, were upon a libel filed by the appellee, John B. Montgomery, condemned as prize of war.

It will serve to explain the nature of the present controversy, and the character of the decree of the circuit court above mentioned, to refer to the proceedings heretofore had therein upon a libel filed by the claimants of the cargo for restitution, and to the decision of this court upon cross-appeals from those proceedings, both by the claimants and the captor, out of which last-mentioned decision the case before us has arisen.

By the decision of this court just referred to, (see 13 Howard, p. 498,) we hold the following propositions to have been expressly ruled:

1. That the admiralty court of the District of Columbia had jurisdiction of the libel for the condemnation of the property in contest, although such property was not brought within its jurisdiction; and if they found the subject liable to condemnation, might proceed to condemn, although not in fact within the custody or control of the court.

2. That the admiralty court in the District of Columbia, having jurisdiction of the case, it was its duty to order the captors

\* to institute proceedings in that court to condemn the [ \* 112 ] property as prize, by a day to be named in the order; and in default thereof to be proceeded against upon a libel for an unlawful seizure; because the property of the claimant is not divested by

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the capture, but by condemnation in a prize court—is not divested until condemnation, though such condemnation will relate back to the capture.

3. That the grounds alleged for the seizure of the vessel and cargo, namely, that the vessel sailed from New Orleans with the design of trading with the enemy, and did in fact hold illegal intercourse with them, are sufficient, if supported by testimony, to subject both vessel and cargo to condemnation.

4. And if they were liable to condemnation, the reasons assigned in the answer for not bringing the vessel and cargo into a port of the United States for trial—namely: that it was impossible so to do consistently with the public interest—is sufficient, if supported by proofs, to justify the captors in selling vessel and cargo in California, and to exempt the captors from damages on that account.

5. That to a libel for restitution, probable cause for seizure is no defense; but is so only against a claim for damages, in cases in which the property has been restored or lost after seizure.

Under the authority of the rulings just enumerated, and in obedience to the mandate founded thereupon, the libel in the cause now before us was filed; and the case made by the parties presents, as the material questions for consideration, the inquiries: 1. Whether the vessel sailed with the design of trading with the enemy, and did in fact hold illegal intercourse with them. 2. Admitting that the vessel and cargo were in the first instance liable to condemnation, whether the reasons assigned for not bringing them within the United States were so supported by proof as to justify the captor in not bringing them within the United States, and in selling them in California, without a forfeiture of their rights as captors.

As a principle applicable to the first of these inquiries, it may be averred as a part of the law of nations—forming a part, too, of the municipal jurisprudence of every country—“that in a state of war between two nations, declared by the authority in whom the municipal constitution vests the power of making war, the two nations and all their citizens or subjects are enemies to each other.” The consequence of this state of hostility is, that all intercourse and communication between them is unlawful. *Vide* Wheaton on Maritime Captures, cap. 7, p. 209, quoting from Bynkershoeck this passage: “*Ex natura belli commercia inter hostes cessare, [\* 113] non est dubitandum. Quamvis nulla specialis \* sit commerciorum prohibitio, ipso tamen jure belli, commercia inter hostes esse vetita, ipsæ indictiones bellorum satis declarant.*”

Upon this principle of public law, it has been the established

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rule of the high court of admiralty in England, that a trading with the enemy, except by a royal license, subjects the property to confiscation. The decisions of that court show that the rule has been rigidly enforced, as, for instance, where the government had authorized a homeward trade from the enemy's possessions, but had not specifically protected an outward trade to the same; and again, in instances where cargoes have been laden before the war, but where the parties had not used all possible diligence to countermand the voyage after the first notice of hostilities; and this rule has been enforced, not only against subjects of the crown, but likewise against those of its allies in the war, upon the assumption that the rule was founded on the universal principle which states allied in war had a right to apply to each other's subjects. *Vide* Wheaton on Captures, p. 212; and 1 C. Robinson's Adm. R. 196, *The Hoop*.

The same rule has been adopted with equal strictness by this court. In the case of *The Rapid*, reported in 8 Cranch, 155, the claimant, a citizen of the United States, had purchased goods in the enemy's country a long time before the declaration of war, and had deposited them on an island near the boundary line between the two countries. Upon the breaking out of hostilities, his agents had hired the vessel to proceed to the place of deposit and bring away these goods. Upon her return the vessel was captured, and, with the cargo, was condemned as prize of war for trading with the enemy. In applying the law to this state of facts, this court said, and said unanimously: "That the universal sense of nations has acknowledged the demoralizing effects that would result from the admission of individual intercourse. The whole nation are embarked in one common bottom, and must be reconciled to submit to one common fate. Every individual of the one nation must acknowledge every individual of the other nation as his own enemy, because the enemy of his country. But, after deciding what is the duty of the citizen, the question occurs, what is the consequence of a breach of that duty? The law of prize is a part of the law of nations. In it, a hostile character is attached to trade, independently of the character of the trader who pursues or directs it. Condemnation to the use of the captor is equally the fate of the property of the belligerent and of the property engaged in anti-neutral trade. But a citizen or an ally may be engaged in a hostile trade, and thereby involve his property in the fate of those in whose cause he embarks." Again, the court say: "If by trading, in prize law, was meant that signification \* of the term [ \* 114 ] which consists in negotiation or contract, this case would

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not come under the penalties of the rule. But the object and spirit of the rule is to cut off all communication or actual locomotive intercourse between individuals of the belligerent nations. Negotiation or contract has, therefore, no necessary connection with the offense. Intercourse inconsistent with actual hostility is the offense against which the operation of the rule is directed."

The case of *The Joseph*, reported in 8 Cranch, p. 451, was that of a vessel owned by citizens of the United States, that sailed from thence before the war, with a cargo on freight, on a voyage to Liverpool and the north of Europe, and thence back to the United States. After arriving and discharging her cargo at Liverpool, she took in another at Hull, and sailed for St. Petersburg. At St. Petersburg, she received news of the war with England, and sailed to London with a Russian cargo consigned to British merchants; delivered her cargo and sailed for the United States in ballast, under a British license, and was captured. In the opinion of this court in this case, delivered by Washington, Justice, it is said: "That after the decision in the cases of *The Rapid* and of *The Alexander*, it is not to be contended, that the sailing with a cargo on freight from St. Petersburg to London, after a full knowledge of the war, did not amount to such a trading with the enemy as to have subjected both the vessel and cargo to condemnation as prize of war, had she been captured on that voyage. The alleged necessity of undertaking that voyage to enable the master out of the freight to discharge his expenses at St. Petersburg—countenanced, as the master declares, by the opinion of our minister at St. Petersburg, that by undertaking such a voyage he would violate no law of the United States—although these considerations, if founded in truth, present a case of peculiar hardship, yet they afford no legal excuse which it is competent to this court to admit as the basis of its decision."

The same course of decision which has established that property of a subject or citizen taken trading with the enemy is forfeited, has decided also that it is forfeited as prize. The ground of the forfeiture is, that it is taken adhering to the enemy, and therefore the proprietor is *pro hac vice* to be considered as an enemy. *Vide* also Wheaton on Captures, p. 219, and 1 C. Robinson, 219, the case of *The Nelly*.

Attempts have been made to evade the rule of public law, by the interposition of a neutral port between the shipment from the belligerent port and their ultimate destination in the enemy's country; but in all such cases the goods have been condemned as having been taken in a course of commerce rendering them



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\* liable to confiscation; and it has been ruled that, with- [ \* 115 ] out license from government, no communication, direct or indirect, can be carried on with the enemy; that the interposition of a prior port makes no difference; that all trade with the enemy is illegal, and the circumstance that the goods are to go first to a neutral port will not make it lawful. 3 C. Robinson, 22, *The Indian Chief*; and 4 C. Robinson, 79, *The Jonge Pieter*.

Having thus stated the law with regard to maritime captures, it remains to be ascertained how far the case before us upon the pleadings and proofs, fall within the scope or the terms of the law.

The libel propounds, that the libellant, as the commander of the United States ship *Portsmouth*, did, on the 7th of April, 1847, at the port of San José in lower California, in the republic of Mexico, seize and take possession of as lawful prize, a certain ship or vessel called the *The Admittance*—one Peter Peterson being the master—with her cargo, provisions, tackle, and all other appurtenances to the said ship belonging. That the said ship is a merchant vessel belonging to citizens of the United States, and that the cargo of said ship is believed by the libellant to have belonged to certain merchants resident in Mexico. That about the month of October, 1846, the said ship with her cargo, left the port of New Orleans for a port in the republic of Mexico, into which port the captain intended to discharge the cargo. That for some time prior to the sailing of this ship, and upon the day of her seizure, open and public war existed between the United States and the republic of Mexico and its dependencies. That in consequence of said state of war, and in discharge of his duty, the ship *Admittance*, with her cargo, was seized by the libellant as prize of war.

The libellant further propounds, that Peterson, as master of the said ship, did sail from the United States with the intention of trading, and in fact did trade and otherwise hold illegal intercourse with the enemies of the United States, whereby the said ship, her cargo, tackle, and appurtenances, became subjects of lawful prize. All which illegal intention and acts of the master more fully appear by the papers of the said ship, and by other papers received from the master by the libellant, numbered from one to fifteen inclusive; from the deposition of William Bell, the first mate of *The Admittance*, and from the log-book—all of which it is prayed may be made parts of the libel; which concludes with a prayer for condemnation of ship and cargo, and for the dismissal of the libel previously filed by Torre, Jecker, and Co., praying restitution of a portion of the cargo.

To the libel of Captain Montgomery were filed an answer on



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[ \* 116 ] \* behalf of Fessenden and Fay, who intervened as owners of the ship, and separate answers on behalf of Jecker, Torre, and Co., and of Manuel Quintana, as owners of the cargo.

These answers, so far as they are made up merely of general denials of the charges propounded in the libel, require no special animadversion. So far, however, as the specific facts alleged in them by way of exculpation, the compatibility of those facts with the established law of prize, or with the proofs adduced in the case, become a question, the statements in these answers are matters of essential importance, requiring particular examination.

The respondents, Fessenden and Fay, have in their answers observed an entire silence with respect to a knowledge on their part as to the destination of the ship or cargo; whilst they are very explicit in the assertion of their belief, that the cargo was put on board by the charterer, and that the ship sailed under a full persuasion that a treaty of peace would speedily terminate the then existing war between the United States and Mexico, and that they never were informed, nor do they believe, that the cargo was to be landed or disposed of in Mexico until after the termination of the war. Personally they say, that they know nothing of what occurred in relation to the ship and cargo in the Pacific; but from what they have learned they believe, and therefore aver, that there was no trading with the enemy at any time during the voyage. This statement, which implies knowledge in the respondents of the existence of war between the United States and Mexico at the time of chartering of their ship, and knowledge likewise that the cargo put on board was destined for the port of a nation, at the time of the shipment at any rate, in open hostility with the United States, will, as to its verity, be further tested by a comparison with the testimony furnished by the papers found in the captured vessel and by the examination of witnesses. And in this connection it may be observed, that the bare permission by the owners of the use of their vessel in hostile or piratical enterprises, renders such vessel liable to capture and condemnation equally with her employment in similar offenses under the immediate command of such owners themselves. *Vide* the case of *The United States v. The Brig Malek Adhel*, 2 How. 234; *The United States v. The Schooner Little Charles*, 1 Brok. Rep. 347; *The Palmyra*, 12 Wheat. 14; 1 C. Rob. R. 127; *The Vrow Judith*.

Comparing this answer with the papers found on board the captured vessel, we see it expressly stipulated in the charter-party, the very contract by which the ship was hired, and which was signed by these respondents, that the ship shall proceed to New Or-

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leans, and there take from the charterers Wylie and \* Ygana, 1,100 bales of cotton, to be delivered at the port [ \* 117 ] of San Blas to the order of the shipper, the consignee paying freight for the room occupied in the ship by the cotton, eleven hundred dollars, payable on delivery of the cargo; the cargo to be received at New Orleans and discharged at San Blas with dispatch. The charter-party further provides, that if on the arrival of the ship off San Blas, the port is blockaded, or other obstructions prevent the discharge of the ship, she shall proceed to the Sandwich Islands, and there remain until the port is open, the said Wylie and Ygana paying in addition to the charter the further sum of one thousand dollars per month during such detention. We will hereafter state what is conceived by this court to be the proper construction of this phrase, "if the port is blockaded, or other obstructions prevent the discharge of the ship." Independently of this phrase, however, we have, on the face of this contract, the declaration that the shipment was made to an enemy's port; that the delivery was to take place at that port; that the interposition of the neutral island of Honolulu was not for the purpose of trade with, or transhipment at that island, but solely for the purpose of affording an opportunity to enter into and discharge at a port known to be an enemy's port, in which the consignees of the cargo resided, and the delivery at which port was made a precedent and necessary condition to the payment of freight.

Upon a comparison of the bill of lading with the charter-party, the *terminus* of the voyage and the destination of the cargo are more clearly shown. The language of the bill of lading runs thus: "Shipped in good order and well conditioned, by Wylie and Ygana, on board the good ship Admittance, whereof is master for the present voyage Peterson, and now lying at New Orleans, and bound for Honolulu, two thousand seven hundred and seven small bales of cotton, being marked and numbered as in the margin, and are to be delivered." Where? Not at Honolulu, where there was no consignee, apparent or mentioned—not at San Blas, as an incidental point in the track of the voyage to Honolulu, but at "the aforesaid port of San Blas," the predetermined limit of the voyage, and to Don Lewis Rivas Gongora, resident at San Blas, the correspondent and consignee of the shipper.

Taking, in connection with the charter-party and the bill of lading, the instructions from the respondent, Fessenden, to the master of the ship before sailing from New Orleans, it seems almost incredible that the owners should have been ignorant of the character of the voyage, and of the hazards incurred by their vessel

resulting from that character. How, upon any other view, can be accounted for the extreme caution enjoined upon the [ \* 118 ] \* master with respect to the danger of entering a Mexican port—danger expressly distinguished from that arising from the probability of capture by vessels of the United States; such as it is said might arise from the disposition of the Mexican government, under the plea of the right of war to confiscate the vessel, notwithstanding the consignees might have obtained permission to land the cargo? It is absurd to suppose that this caution could have had any possible reference to a state of re-established amity between Mexico and the United States, as the vessel of a friendly nation could incur no risk of confiscation by entering the port of a friend. We think that it was to dangers and hazards which might proceed from the Mexican authorities—hazards and dangers incident to an existing and known state of war, which were in the contemplation of the owners when, in the charter-party, they speak of “other obstructions,” (beyond that of blockades,) “which might prevent the discharge of the ship at San Blas,” an enemy’s port. This interpretation of the conduct and purposes of the owners and charterers is strongly corroborated by, and explains that portion of the instructions to the master which tells him, “you will perceive from this that you must be very cautious about going into a Mexican port, for, although the consignees may have authority to land the cotton, yet they might seize the vessel after being discharged, unless the vessel as well as the cargo had permission from the Mexican government.” This language would be unintelligible, unless it had reference to a known belligerent attitude of the two nations, forbidding intercourse or traffic between their respective citizens, and to a contemplated dispensation from the existing prohibitions by one of the belligerents. We are, therefore, upon a just construction of the answer of the claimants of the vessel, of the charter-party signed by them, of the bill of lading, and of the instructions to the master, impelled to the conclusion, that these claimants of the vessel were aware of the character of the voyage for which they had hired her, and were willing, nevertheless, to incur the hazards of the enterprise in consideration of the profits it promised them.

Looking next beyond the evidence of intention and knowledge as deducible from the ship’s papers proper, to the acts of the master in execution of the objects and purposes of the voyage, the following facts are shown by the testimony of the witnesses, Bell, Martin, and Graves, all of them belonging to the crew of *The Admittance*, and the first named being the mate of the ship: That she sailed

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directly to San Blas; that upon her arrival off this port, then being an enemy's port, and in the possession of the enemy, she remained before it three days and nights, during which time the master opened an intercourse with the port, \*receiving at [ \* 119 ] different times communications therefrom, to which he replied; that whilst off San Blas the captain showed no American ensign, but after receiving the communications from the shore, he ordered the chief mate not to head the log-book, and also directed the concealment of the ship's name by covering her stern with painted canvas, and then proceeded along the coast as far as 188 north, looking for some bay or inlet on the coast of Mexico where the cargo might be delivered; but finding no suitable place, the ship was headed for San José, California. It is further proved by the witnesses, Mesroon and Bell, that The Admittance entered the port of San José before it was captured by the forces of the United States, and when it was still a Mexican port, in the possession of the enemies of the United States; and the witnesses, Bell and Graves, both of the crew of The Admittance, swear that the captain, before the seizure, landed goods at this hostile port. Upon every correct view, then, of the facts of this case, and of the law of prize as applicable to these facts, it is clear that the ship Admittance was properly subject to seizure and condemnation as prize of war.

We have seen, by the authorities cited, that intercourse with the enemy is sufficient cause for personal punishment, and for the confiscation of property; that it is a cause originating in, and inflexibly enforced by necessity for guarding the public safety. In this cause are established against the claimants of this vessel, not only intercourse, but trading, in its common acceptation. Moreover, it is a settled principle, that if the owners had not anticipated a violation of the public law, the fate of their vessel, with respect to an infraction of that law, must depend upon the conduct of the agent with whom they have entrusted its management.

With respect to the respondents, Jecker, Torre, and Co., and Quintana, claimants of the cargo, the written documents found on board the captured vessel, and surrendered to the libellant by the master, fasten upon these claimants not only a knowledge of the design, under the pretext of a voyage to the Sandwich Islands, of trading with citizens of the United States, a belligerent nation, but they fix upon those parties strenuous and active efforts to possess themselves of the fruits of that traffic—the cargo of the ship; and to obtain them, not even by the circuitous voyage to Honolulu, but by direct transit to and within the territory of the enemy's nation.

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It is a circumstance of much significance disclosed by these papers, that there appears to have existed a perfect understanding and preconcert between these claimants, the charterers of the vessel, and the master. The arrival of the master is anticipated and [ \* 120 ] waited for, and no \* sooner does his vessel appear on the Mexican coast, (the war still continuing,) than she is boarded from the shore by the agents of the claimants, bringing assurances of arrangements made for the violation of the law of war, and of the safety with which that violation might be accomplished.

Thus, on the 12th of February, 1847, a letter from which the following extracts are taken, was addressed by the agent of the claimants, Jecker, Torre, and Co., Louis Rivas Gongora, to the master of The Admittance:

“CAPT. P. PETERSON, Ship Admittance, off San Blas.

SIR: I have been informed of your sailing from New Orleans with a cargo of cotton to my consignment, and have also received a copy of Messrs. Wylie and Ygana's instructions for your guidance; also a copy of your charter-party. But as it will be more for the convenience of all parties concerned, that in case of your not being allowed by the blockading vessels to enter San Blas or Manzanilla, you should not proceed to the Sandwich Islands, which are very distant, but in the first place to San José near Cape San Lucas, which is in possession of the Americans, I have to request that if you find the port of San Blas blockaded, and should be warned off, you will, as is directed in your instructions, proceed to Manzanilla, where, if you are allowed to enter, you will find an agent meeting you there, who will receive your cargo. If San Blas is open when you arrive, you will come into the bay immediately and anchor, putting yourself under the orders of Don Eustaquio Pasiere, who will proceed to discharge your cargo; and as it is of much importance that the cotton should be on shore as soon as possible, I hope you will do everything on your part to commence and to finish discharging with the least possible delay. If you are permitted to enter San Blas or Manzanilla, you must come in under British colors, the name of the vessel and your own remaining without alteration, still reporting yourself from New Orleans; but you will be careful not to deliver any of the papers of the ship or cargo to any one except to Don Eustaquio Pasiere.”

Again on the 27th of the same month, this person thus addresses the master from Tepic:

“CAPT. P. PETERSON, Ship Admittance, off San Blas.

“SIR: I had the pleasure to write to you on the 12th of this

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month, which will be delivered to you along with this. But as at present certain circumstances have taken place which, I think, make it too dangerous for you to come into San Blas, I have to request that you will proceed immediately to Manzanilla, and \* put yourself under the orders of Don Manuel de la [ \* 121 ] Quintana, who has gone to meet you there, and who will deliver to you a letter, authorizing him to act as your consignee. He will discharge your vessel, pay your freight, and transact all the business of your vessel the same as if I was present. You will please enter Manzanilla under English colors, and, as the war continues, you will take care that it shall not be known that your vessel is American."

In proof of the agency of Rivas, as the representative of Jecker, Torre, and Co., and as affecting them by his acts, reference may be made to a communication from that firm, dated Mazatlan, April 1, 1847, addressed to the master of The Admittance, which communication was doubtless prepared on entire ignorance of the seizure of that vessel, which had occurred only three days previously at San José. In this communication it is said: "Should this find you at San José, we have to request you to proceed at once to San Blas, referring you at the same time to the accompanying letter for you from Don Luis Rivas de Gongora, of Tepic. Mr. Rivas has furnished us with copies of your letters to him, of the dates of the 3d and 4th of March, by which it appears you entertain fears of being seized by an English or American cruiser should you follow his recommendation to discharge under English colors." They then refer the master to Mr. Mott and Mr. Bolton, for assurances that his apprehensions are groundless, and state, "that in less than a month previously an American vessel discharged at San Blas without let or hindrance; that the difficulty with regard to the vessel in a Mexican port had been overcome by an order of the supreme government, by which vessels of any nation were permitted to enter, provided that the captain would make a declaration to the effect that he belonged to a friendly or neutral nation, no papers confirming that assertion being required of him."

We think, then, that by the evidence found in the possession of the master of The Admittance, there is shown a complicity in all the respondents in premeditating, and as far as they had power in executing, a scheme for effecting intercourse and trade with the open enemies of the United States—an offense such as rendered all the means and instruments for the accomplishment of such a scheme lawful prize of war.

But it has been insisted, that should it be conceded that there



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existed originally sufficient grounds for capture and condemnation, still the captor had forfeited all right of prize by omitting to send the vessel and cargo to the United States for adjudication, and by selling them without the justification of necessity in a foreign country. The libellant has alleged, in justification [ \* 122 ] \* of the disposition of the vessel and cargo, "that he was at the time of the capture of The Admittance at a great distance from the United States, and, without weakening inconveniently the force under his command in his own ship, he could not have spared a sufficient prize crew and officers to command the captured ship, and to bring her into the United States."

The exception here taken brings up the inquiry, as to the duty and power of a captor to send in his prize for adjudication, and as to the discretion vested in him in deciding upon the extent of that duty, and the feasibility of that power under existing circumstances. This inquiry has been treated with so much force and perspicuity by Mr. Justice Curtis, in a case adjudged by him between a portion of these respondents as claimants of the ship, and the libellants, that it cannot be more clearly and at the same time more succinctly elucidated than it will be by reference to the opinion of that judge in the case alluded to, (*vide* *Fay et al. v. Montgomery*, 1 Curtis's R. 266.) In that case, the judge remarks: "The grounds on which restitution is claimed are thus stated in the libel, 'that the seizure and detention were without any legal, justifiable, reasonable, or probable cause; and even if there had been probable cause for the seizure of the said vessel, the said Montgomery was legally bound to send the same to the United States for trial, which might easily have been done, but which the said Montgomery illegally and unjustifiably omitted to do, and thereby illegally converted the same to his own use.' Here (says the judge) are two distinct grounds: the first being that the seizure was an act of illegal violence; and the second, that, by not sending the vessel to the United States for trial, the respondent had illegally converted it to his own use." After commenting upon the evidence which led his mind to the conclusion that there was properly a question of prize to be tried, the judge remarks: "And this brings me to consider the other ground stated in the libel, that by his omission to send the vessel to the United States for trial, the respondent illegally converted the vessel to his own use. That captors may so act towards prize property as to forfeit their rights as captors, and render themselves liable to make restitution, with or without damages, is clear. But before the court can so declare, a case of forfeiture of rights, free from all reasonable doubt, must



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be made out. In considering this part of the case, the question is, whether the allegation that the respondent omitted to send the vessel to the United States for trial, when he could safely and properly have done so, and thereby illegally converted the property to his own use, is made out in proof." The answer of the respondent to this part of the libel states: "That it was impossible for him, consistently with the public interests committed to his direction, \* to have sent the ship *Admittance* to any port of [ \* 123 ] the United States." The judge proceeds to say: "Before considering the facts upon which the forfeiture is asserted, one principle should be stated, which is entitled to an important effect on this part of the case. It is, that an honest exercise of discretion, necessarily arising out of his command, cannot be treated as such misconduct in the commander of a public ship of war, as will forfeit his fair title, and render him liable to be treated as a trespasser. This principle is too obviously just to require the support of authority; but it will be found to have been laid down and applied in the case of *Dinsman v. Wilkes*, in 12 How. 390.

"Now it must be admitted, that the question whether the necessities of the public service will allow the commander of a ship of war, in time of war, upon a remote station on the other side of the globe, to spare one of his officers to go home in command of a prize, is one depending on his discretion, necessarily arising out of his command. In the first instance, he alone has the power to decide the question—he alone has the needful knowledge of facts, and he is bound to exercise his judgment upon them. Certainly his judgment is not conclusive—good faith and reasonable discretion are requisite; but it would not only be a hardship, but injustice, to impose on the commander the duty of determining such a question, and, when he has determined it, to attribute to him as an act of misconduct that he did not come to a different conclusion. It is true, that it is a clear duty of a commander to send in his prize for adjudication, but this is not an absolute obligation. It depends on his ability to perform it; and of this, as already said, he must judge in the first instance; and if he decides with reasonable discretion and an honest purpose to do his duty, I cannot consider him as guilty of misconduct which works a forfeiture."

The judge then, after an examination of the proofs in the case, and of the law as above expounded by him, comes to the following conclusion: "Keeping these principles in view, I am not satisfied that, in omitting to send the vessel to the United States, Captain Montgomery violated any known duty, or acted with so little discretion as to render him liable as a trespasser." And he

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closes his review of the evidence with this very forcible view of its just import and character: "One of the lieutenants of The Portsmouth was serving on shore—two only remained; and it does not appear that a single passed-midshipman was on board. Lieutenant Revere [one of the remaining lieutenants on board] has given an opinion—no doubt an honest one—that he might have been spared; but it is an opinion formed under no responsibility of command; and I am not prepared to say that a sloop of war [ \* 124 ] on that coast, at that time, officered by only \* two lieutenants, ought to have been left with only one, in order to send home a prize—and still less, that the commander erred so grossly, in not detaching this officer on such service, as to forfeit his legal rights thereby."

The facts which are applicable to this part of the case now before us, are essentially, if not literally, those adduced in the trial before the judge whose opinion has been just quoted; and the very clear exposition of those facts, with the legal deductions from them, as set forth in that opinion, command our entire approbation, and are regarded as conclusive against the appellants upon the question of forfeiture by the appellee of his right of prize.

Another exception urged in the argument as fatal to the decree of the circuit court demands our notice, and it is this: That the proceedings instituted in the district court for the condemnation of the vessel and cargo as prize of war were in the name of the libellant, the captor, whereas they should have been commenced and prosecuted in the name of the United States. This irregularity, for such it must be admitted to be, may have proceeded from a misapprehension of the opinion of this court in the case of *Jecker, Torre, and Co. v. Montgomery*; (see 13 How. 498;) in which opinion it is stated to be the duty of the district court to order the captor to institute proceedings in that court for the condemnation of the property as prize of war, by a certain day to be named by the court. The exception thus urged is not raised in the answers or in any other form of pleading in the court below. The parties have gone to trial upon allegations connected with the merits, and upon such testimony as they have chosen to introduce. It would seem to be a sufficient answer to this exception to say, that after its waiver or after an omission to urge it in the court below, and after going into an extended range of testimony as applicable to the merits of the case, to permit an exception entirely distinct from the merits, in the appellate court, would be extending an improper license to the party starting such exception, and might be productive of injustice to his opponent. The exception is unquestionably

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technical or formal. It embraces neither the question of power of the captor to seize, nor that of the character of the subjects of capture as lawful prize of war. Moreover, this exception, if allowable, would seem to have no other object or purpose, but that of securing the ends which the proceedings and decree of the court have in fact accomplished; for it is seen that the libel, though filed in the name of the captor, was founded upon the public authority of the United States, and the decree pronounced in the case is in favor and in the name of the government, by whom it is shown the proceeds of the condemned \* subject have [ \* 125 ] been actually received. It is plain, therefore, that every purpose which the most formal proceeding could have effected, and nothing beyond this, has been accomplished by the decree in this case; and the proposal now pressed upon the court is, that in virtue of a formal exception, which either has been waived or omitted in the proper time and place, the merits of this controversy voluntarily submitted, and fully examined, should be entirely lost sight of, and that the party who alone, within the purview of the exception itself, could regularly claim the subject of the controversy, should for the mere form be required to surrender that subject. Such a proposal should be regarded as neither equitable nor reasonable, and should be especially discountenanced by a tribunal which acts upon principles of an enlarged public policy—less fettered perhaps than any other by narrow technical rules.

This case bears a strong resemblance to that of *Benton v. Woolsey* and the Bank of Utica, reported in 12 Pet. 27, in which the district attorney of the United States filed an information in his own name, in behalf of the United States, in the district court for the northern district of New York, to enforce a mortgage given to the United States by Woolsey, one of the defendants. This court in that case hold this doctrine: "Some doubts were at first entertained by the court whether this proceeding could be sustained in the form adopted by the district court. It is a bill of information and complaint in the name of the district attorney in behalf of the United States. But on carefully examining the bill, it appears to be in substance a proceeding by the United States, although in form it is in the name of the officer; and we find that this form of proceeding in such cases has been for a long time used without objection in the courts of the United States held in New York, and was doubtless borrowed from analogous cases in the courts of the State where the State was plaintiff in the suit. No objection has been made to it either in the court below or in this court, and we think that the United States may be con-

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Ham v. State of Missouri.

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sidered as the real party, although in its form it is the complaint of the district attorney.”

The objection which has been made to the deposit in the treasury of the money arising from the sale of the captured property in this case, appears to be without weight. Since the act of congress of the 3d of March, 1849, it appears to be the intention and the positive mandate of congress, that all prize money arising from captures by vessels of the navy of the United States, whether received by marshals for the sale of prizes, or in the hands of prize agents, should be deposited in the treasury of the United States.

[ \* 126 ] *Vide* § 8th of the act, Stats. at \*Large, vol. ix, p. 378. It does not clearly appear in whose hands the proceeds of the sale of The Admittance and her cargo were at the date of the above statute. But if they were in the possession of Captain Montgomery at or after that time, either as captor or prize master, or whether they were in the hands of any other person, it was within the scope and objects of the law to place the proceeds of the prize sale in the treasury of the United States; and accordingly it is shown by the certificate of the treasurer of the United States, that the sum of sixty-seven thousand dollars, as the proceeds of the sale of The Admittance, were on the 26th of December, 1849, by William Speiden, purser of the navy of the United States, deposited in the treasury of the United States.

Upon a consideration of the facts and the law of this case, we are of the opinion that the decree of the circuit court be affirmed.

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ADAM HAM, Plaintiff in Error, v. THE STATE OF MISSOURI.

18 H. 126.

SCHOOL LANDS—SIXTEENTH SECTION.

1. It was the intention of the 6th section of the act of March, 1820, under which the State of Missouri was organized, to grant to the State, for school purposes, every sixteenth section of land not otherwise disposed of to which the United States had a good title.
2. The 10th section of the act of March 3, 1811, and its proviso, did not hinder the United States from making this grant.
3. The confirmation by congress, in the act of 1828, of the claim of the proprietors of Mine la Motte, which had been rejected several years before the act of 1820, did not, nor was it intended to, defeat the title to the sixteenth section which passed by the act of 1820. It only purported to relinquish such title as the United States had at its passage in 1828.

THIS was a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Missouri, and the case is fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Geyer*, for plaintiff in error.

No counsel for the State.

\* Mr. Justice DANIEL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 127 ]

\* Upon a writ of error to the supreme court of the [ \* 128 ] State, under the authority of the 25th section of the judiciary act.

The proceedings now under review were founded upon an indictment in the circuit court of the county of St. Francis, against the plaintiff in error, for having committed waste and trespass on the sixteenth section of lands situated in congressional township number thirty-four, range seven east, as being school lands belonging to the inhabitants of the township aforesaid.

Upon this indictment the plaintiff was convicted, and condemned to pay a fine assessed by the jury, of four hundred dollars, together with the costs of the prosecution. From the judgment of the circuit court, the plaintiff in error having taken an appeal to the supreme court of Missouri, by the latter tribunal that judgment was in all things affirmed; the same plaintiff now seeks its reversal here, in virtue of several acts of congress alleged to be applicable to this case.

Upon the trial in the circuit court, the following facts were either established in proof or admitted by the parties:

1. A joint petition on the part of Jean Batiste Vallé, and the heirs of François Vallé, Jean Batiste Pratte, and St. Geunne Beauvais, presented on the 15th of October, 1800, to Delassus, the lieutenant governor of upper Louisiana, praying for a grant of two leagues square of land on the river St. François, including the mine, known by the name of Mine à la Motte, and the lands adjacent.

2. An acknowledgment by the lieutenant governor, dated January 22, 1801, of his want of power to grant a concession of the extent prayed for, and the fact of his having transmitted the petition to the intendant general, with the expression of an opinion favorable to the grant, and to the character of the applicants.

3. An order by the intendant general, that the documents presented in behalf of the petitioners should be translated into the Castilian language, and then be laid before the fiscal agent.

4. A plat and survey for 28,224 arpens, or 24,142 acres of land, situated on the river St. Francis, certified by Nathaniel Cook, as deputy surveyor of the district of St. Genevieve, said by him to have been made by virtue of a concession by Delassus to J. B.

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and François Vallé, Beauvais, and Pratte, on the 22d of January, 1801.

5. The proceedings of the board of commissioners for the examination of land titles, on the 27th of December, 1811, setting forth the claim of Jean Batiste and François Vallé, Jean Batiste Pratte, and St. Geunne Beauvais, for two leagues of land, including the La Motte Mine, founded on the recommendation from Lieu-  
[ \* 129 ] tenant Governor Delassus for a concession, bearing \* date on the 22d of January, 1801, and the order of the intendant general already mentioned, and the rejection of the claim by the commissioners.

6. The first section of an act of congress, approved May 24, 1828, confirming to François Vallé, Jean Batiste Vallé, Jean Batiste Pratte, and St. Geunne Beauvais, their heirs or legal representatives, a tract of land not exceeding two leagues square, situated in the county of Madison, in the State of Missouri, commonly known by the name of the Mine la Motte, according to a field plat and survey made by Nathaniel Cook, deputy surveyor of St. Genevieve, on the 22d day of February, 1806, with a proviso in the said first section, that the confirmation thus granted shall extend only to a relinquishment of title on the part of the United States, nor prejudice the rights of third persons, nor any title heretofore derived from the United States, either by purchase or donation.

7. A plat and survey made by Jenifer Sprigg, deputy surveyor, in the months of March, 1829, and August, 1830, of the La Motte Mine tract of land, stated to contain 23,728.02 acres of land, confirmed to François Vallé, Jean Batiste Vallé, Jean Batiste Pratte, by an act of congress approved on the 24th of December, 1828.

8. A patent from the president of the United States, bearing date on the 25th of March, 1839, granted under the authority of the act of congress last mentioned, (and in virtue of a title derived from the confirmees,) to Lewis F. Linn and Evariste Pratte, for the La Motte Mine, and the land surrounding the same, containing 23,728.02 acres of land, in conformity with the survey of Sprigg, as certified from the general land office; this patent, containing literally the proviso in the act of congress limiting the grant to the patentees, to a relinquishment of the title of the United States at the date of the act of congress of 1828.

9. An admission on the part of the State, that all the right, title, and claim of the original proprietors of the Mine la Motte tract of land had regularly passed to and was vested in Thomas Fleming, as fully as those proprietors had or could have had the same.



10. A lease from Thomas Fleming, of the 9th of April, 1849, to Ham, the plaintiff in error, for a portion of the Mine la Motte land.

11. An admission further on the part of the State, that the sixteenth section claimed as school lands, was within the lines of the original survey of the tract made by Nathaniel Cook, and of the other surveys given in evidence.

Upon the trial of the indictment, the circuit court, at the \*instance of the counsel for the State, instructed the [ \* 130 ] jury, "that the act of the 6th of March, 1820, entitled 'An act to authorize the people of Missouri Territory to form a constitution and state government,' &c., taken in connection with an ordinance declaring the assent thereto by the people of Missouri, by their representatives assembled in convention on the 19th of July, 1820, operated as a grant by congress to the State of Missouri for the use of schools, of the 16th section in controversy, unless such 16th section had been previously disposed of by government.

"That, although the land claimed by the proprietors of Mine la Motte was, by the several acts of congress, reserved from sale, and that the survey of said claim includes the 16th section in controversy, yet such reservation is not such disposition of said section by the government, as is within the saving clause of the 6th section of the act of 1820, and cannot operate to prevent the title from vesting in the State, by virtue of said grant."

The defendant in the prosecution prayed of the court the following instructions, which were refused:

"That if the jury believe the land in question is included within the original grant by the Spanish government, and within the lines of the survey made by N. Cook, in 1806, and within the lines of the lands confirmed by the act of congress to the original grantees and those claiming under them, then this land never was public land, subject or liable to be donated by congress to the State for the use of schools.

"That the several acts of congress reserving section 16 for the support of schools, could only refer to the public lands proper, and could not attach to private claims, which had previous to such donation been claimed by individuals, and reserved by congress to satisfy those claims.

"That the confirmation of the claim by the act of congress of 1828, conferred and gave a superior title to the lands in question, over the title of the State for the use of schools."

Upon the accuracy or inaccuracy of the instructions given by the



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court at the instance of the State, and of those denied by it upon the prayer of the defendant in the prosecution, the decision of this cause must depend.

It would seem not to admit of rational doubt, that the act of congress of March 6, 1820, authorizing the people of the Territory of Missouri to form a constitution and State government, taken in connection with the ordinance of the State convention of the 19th of July, 1820, amounted not merely to a grant for the use of schools, of the 16th section of every township of public lands in the Territory, but, further, to a positive condition or mandate, so far as congress possessed the power to impose it, for the dedica-  
[ \* 131 ] tion of those sections to that object. The assertion \* of the court, then, of the existence and character of such grant, whilst it recognized any proper limitation or qualification imposed thereon, either by previous acts of congress or by the investiture of any rights arising therefrom, can be obnoxious to no just criticism, but was in all respects proper.

Whether or not the lands claimed by the proprietors of the Mine la Motte, so far as they cover a portion of the sixteenth section of township 34, range 7 east, are exempted from the operation of the act of March 6, 1820, and of the ordinance of July 19, 1820, must depend upon the correct interpretation of the previous legislation of congress, and upon the acts and position of the claimants with reference to that legislation.

By the 10th section of the act of congress, approved March 3, 1811, authorizing the president of the United States to offer for sale such portions of the public lands lying in the State of Louisiana as shall have been surveyed under the direction of the 8th section of the same statute, it is provided that "all such lands, with the exception of section number sixteen, which shall be reserved in each township for the use of schools," (and with the exception, further, of a township of land granted by the 7th section of the same statute for the use of a seminary of learning, and of certain salt springs and lead mines,) "shall be offered for sale to the highest bidder, under the direction of the register of the land office, the receiver of public moneys, and principal deputy surveyor." In this 10th section is contained a proviso, "that till after the decision of congress thereon, no tract of land shall be offered for sale, the claim to which has been in due time and according to law presented to the recorder of land titles in the district of Louisiana, and filed in his office for the purpose of being investigated by the commissioners appointed to ascertain the rights of persons claiming lands in the Territory of Louisiana."

Upon this 10th section of the act of 1811, and the proviso thereto annexed, is founded the position taken by the plaintiff in error, that the sixteenth section of township 34 did not and could not vest in the State of Missouri, in virtue of the act of March 3, 1820, and of the ordinance of July 19 of the same year, so far as that section fell within the proviso. In comparing the enacting part of § 10 of the statute of 1811 with the proviso annexed thereto, it will strike the attention that the limitation or restriction contained in the proviso has no connection, by its terms, with lands granted or donated for schools, but relates altogether to such lands as it was designed and declared should be sold at public auction to the highest bidder.

Such, certainly, were not the lands appropriated to a specific, ultimate, and permanent purpose, namely, the support of schools. \* As to these lands, sales, and every other dis- [\* 132] position inconsistent with such dedication, were expressly inhibited. But, putting aside the literal meaning of the 10th section and its proviso, it may well be asked whether the language and objects of the latter can be made to import anything beyond a temporary suspension of the sales of the lands intended for sale, for the simple purposes of investigation ; and much more, whether the 10th section of the act of 1811, and the proviso thereto, can be interpreted to mean a denial to itself by congress of the right and power to sell or to give, either upon satisfactory evidence of the invalidity of any opposing claim, or upon considerations of public policy, the land embraced within the suspension.

Such an interpretation, as it is not warranted by the language of the acts of congress, seems not to accord either with considerations of justice or policy. Suppose that congress, after the passage of the law of 1811, should become satisfied of the groundless nature of a claim presented to the commissioners, and should be convinced further, not only of the benefits to result from appropriating the subject of that claim to purposes of education, but also of there having pledged that subject to such purposes; it cannot be questioned that the power to reject or disregard an unfounded claim, and to comply with a previous and just obligation, remained in a plenary and unimpaired extent in congress; and that this right and obligation could in no degree be affected by a mere agreement to investigate.

Let it be remembered, too, that the application of those under whom the plaintiff in error deduces his alleged title was for a simple gratuity, founded on no consideration whatever but the bounty of the donor. The opinion and the action by congress with respect to the rights of the parties to that controversy, seemed to have been

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entirely coincident with the views herein suggested. Under the provision of the act of 1811, the proprietors of the Mine la Motte presented their claim, together with such evidence as they deemed essential to its support, to the tribunal created by law for the investigation of land titles. By this tribunal the claim of these proprietors was rejected on the 27th of December, 1811. From the period last mentioned until the 24th of May, 1828, an interval of seventeen years, this claim remains dormant or quiescent, when it is confirmed at the date last mentioned.

The nature and effect of this confirmation will presently be considered; but in the interval above mentioned, the government, (the undoubted possessor of the title,) after the lapse of nine years from the rejection by its agent of this slumbering title, by express compact with the State of Missouri, grants to that State, for the use of schools, the sixteenth section of every township in the State which had not been sold or "otherwise disposed of."

[ \* 133 ] \* Upon recurring to the law of May 24, 1828, it will be borne in mind that the confirmation to the proprietors of the Mine la Motte is extended merely to a relinquishment of the title of the United States at the date of that law, and is declared to have no influence to prejudice the rights of third persons, nor any title heretofore derived from the United States, either by purchase or donation.

It is proper to keep in view this proviso in this confirmation, in order to ascertain its effect, if any, upon the proper meaning of the qualification in the grant to the State of Missouri comprised in the phrase "or otherwise disposed of."

In our construction of the act of congress of March 3, 1811, we have interpreted the proviso to the 10th section of that act as neither declaring nor importing a final and permanent divestiture, or any divestiture whatsoever, of the title of the United States, but as a provision prescribing a temporary arrangement merely for the purposes of investigation, leaving the title still in the government, to be retained or parted with according to the dictates of justice or policy, as these might be developed by such investigation. Nothing is here ordained which is definite in its character. Inquiry is all that is directed. The language and plain import of the 6th section of the act of the 3d of March, 1820, confer a clear and positive and unconditional donation of the sixteenth section in every township; and, when these have been sold or otherwise disposed of, other and equivalent lands are granted. Sale, necessarily signifying a legal sale by a competent authority, is a disposition, final and irrevocable, of the land. The phrase "or otherwise disposed of" must

signify some disposition of the property equally efficient, and equally incompatible with any right in the State, present or potential, as deducible from the act of 1820, and the ordinance of the same year. Upon any other hypothesis, the right to the sixteenth section would attach under the provision of the act of 1820; the State would still have the title, and could recover the section specifically, and there would be no necessity for providing for an equivalent for that section.

Under our interpretation of the acts of March 3, 1811, and of May 24, 1828, no title can have passed to the proprietors of the La Motte Mine lands. The reply of the lieutenant governor, Delessus, to the petition of the applicants for the mine, acknowledges explicitly the absence of all power in that officer to make the grant asked for, and refers those petitioners to the intendant general, as the only functionary possessing authority to make it. This officer took no further action upon the petition than to order its translation into the Castilian language.

On the 27th of December, 1811, this claim was before the commissioners for the examination of land titles in the State of \*Louisiana, and was rejected by them. From this [ \* 134 ] period of time down to the 24th of May, 1828, no grant from the United States, nor evidences of title from any source, except those already referred to, have been shown by the plaintiff or those under whom he claims. In the meantime, the United States, the undoubted legal owners of the land in controversy, by the act of March 3, 1820, bestow it on the State, as they had full authority so to do—bestow the specific section, it never having been disposed of within the intent and meaning of the 6th section of the act last mentioned.

The confirmation in 1828, and the patent of the 25th of March, 1839, professing to confer no title but such as remained in the United States at those periods respectively, and the grant of the sixteenth section in township 34, range east, comprised within the survey of the Mine la Motte, having been made seven years anterior to the confirmation, which constitutes the only ground of title in the claimants of the mine, the pretensions of the confirmees to the section in controversy must be regarded as without foundation and utterly null.

The view which this court has taken of the evidence in this cause, and of the law as applicable to that evidence, dispenses with any necessity for an examination *seriatim* of the instructions asked by the plaintiff in error upon the trial of the indictment, and refused by the court. It is sufficient to remark, that the positions assumed

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Guild v. Frontin.

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in the instructions so prayed for, being incompatible with the law of this case as expounded by this court, we deem those instructions to have been properly refused. It is the opinion of this court, that the decision of the supreme court of the State of Missouri, pronounced in this cause, sustaining that of the circuit court, is correct, and ought to be, as it is hereby, affirmed.

Mr. Justice NELSON. I concur in the judgment of the court upon the ground that, though the 10th section of the act of March 3, 1811, had the effect to prevent the title of Missouri to this land from vesting, until the final decision by congress upon the claim of Vallé and others, yet the act of May 24, 1828, confirming lands to Vallé and others, operated as such final decision, and, by its true construction, excepted out of the confirmation so much of the land as was included in section sixteen, the public surveys of the township having been made before the passage of the last-mentioned act. I do not know that the opinion of the court is intended to go further than this. If it does, I do not assent thereto.

Mr. Justice CURTIS concurred with Mr. Justice NELSON.

Mr. Justice GRIER also concurred with Mr. Justice NELSON.

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ALBERT H. GUILD and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. JOSEPH FRONTIN.

18 H. 135.

WAIVER OF JURY—NO BILL OF EXCEPTIONS.

In a suit at law submitted to the court without a jury, where the record shows no agreed statement of facts, nor finding of facts by the court, nor bill of exceptions to the ruling of the court, there is nothing into which this court can look for error, and the judgment must be affirmed. *Graham v. Bayne*, 18 H. 60, *ante*; *Kearney v. Case*, 12 Wall. 275.

WRIT of error to the district court for the northern district of California.

The point involved needs no other statement of the case than what is found in the opinion.

*Mr. Blair*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Cutting* for defendant.

Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

The record and proceedings in this case are in conformity with

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Savignac v. Garrison.

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the practice of the State courts of California. It was tried without the intervention of a jury, and the testimony, together with the opinion of the court, filed of record. But there is no special verdict, or agreed statement of facts, on which the judgment was rendered; nor is there any bill of exceptions, sealed by the court, to their decision on any question of law. We are, in fact, called upon to review the case on the pleadings, exhibits, and testimony, as if it were a bill in chancery. Our very frequent decisions on this subject seem not to have come to the knowledge of the bar in the court below. Parties may, by consent, waive the trial of issues of fact by a jury, and submit the trial of both facts and law to the court. It will not be a mistrial. But if they wish the judgment of the court to be reviewed on a writ of error, a special verdict or agreed statement of facts must be put on record. The issues of fact must be ascertained, and made certain, before a court of error can review the decision of an inferior court. If the verdict do not find all the issues, or the agreed statement in the nature of a special verdict be imperfect or incomplete, this court may order a *venire de novo*, because of the mistrial, as in the case of *Graham v. Bayne*, *ante*, p. 60, at this term. But having jurisdiction of the cause, and no error appearing on the face of the record, the judgment of the court below must be affirmed.

The case of *Prentice v. Zane*, 8 How. 470, is directly in point on this subject.

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ALFRED SAVIGNAC, Plaintiff in Error, v. ABRAHAM GARRISON.

18 H. 136.

ST. LOUIS LAND TITLES—OUT-LOTS.

The doctrine of the case of *Guitard v. Stoddard*, 16 How. 494, reaffirmed, that whether the lot and its habitation and cultivation or possession comes within the protection of the act of 1812 were questions of fact to be submitted to the jury; and that the neglect to procure a survey and location, under the act of 1824, did not forfeit the title acquired under the former act.

THE case is brought here by writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Missouri, and is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Baxter*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Ewing*, for defendant.

Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the circuit court of the United States for the district of Missouri.



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Savignac v. Garrison.

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The plaintiff below, Garrison, brought an action of ejectment against Savignac, to recover the possession of a lot of land in the city of St. Louis, claiming title derived from the confirmation of Mordecai Bell's Spanish claim by the act of congress of 1835.

The defendant claimed title to the lot under the 1st section of the act of 13th of June, 1812, which provided "that the rights, titles, and claims to town or village lots, out-lots, common field lots, and commons, in, adjoining, and belonging to the several towns or villages, (enumerating several, of which St. Louis was one,) which lots have been inhabited, cultivated, or possessed prior to the 20th December, 1803, shall be, and the same is hereby confirmed to the inhabitants of the respective towns or villages, according to their several right or rights in common thereto."

Evidence was given on the trial, by the defendant, deducing a title or claim to the lot in question, derived from Charles Simoneau, and also evidence tending to prove that the lot was an out-lot within the purview of the act of 1812, and that Simoneau was in possession and cultivation of it prior to the 20th December, 1803.

[ \* 137 ] \*After the testimony closed, the court instructed the jury that "there was no evidence that Simoneau cultivated any out-lot or common field lot; nor that any one existed at the place where the cultivation was; nor had the act of 1812 application to this land, so far as Simoneau, or those claiming under him, are concerned. And further, that if there had existed an out-lot or common field lot, undefined by boundaries, which was claimed on the ground of inhabitation, cultivation, or possession, then the act of the 26th May, 1824, required that the fact of inhabitation, cultivation, or possession, and the boundaries and extent of such claim, should be proved before the recorder of land titles, to enable the surveyor general to distinguish the private from the vacant lots. And no steps having been taken under the act of 1824, nor any authoritative location or survey of the land, at any time, either under the Spanish government or the government of the United States, the evidence given in this case will not enable the defendant to resist a recovery by the plaintiff."

The case of *Guitard et al. v. Stoddard*, 16 How. 494, decided since this case was tried at the circuit, disposes of both branches of the instructions to which we have referred, holding that whether or not the lot, and the inhabitation, cultivation, or possession thereof, came within the purview of the act of 1812, were questions of fact for the jury; and that the neglect to procure the survey and location, under the act of 1824, did not operate to impair or forfeit the title acquired under that of 1812.



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Parker v. Overman.

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As the judgment of the court below must be reversed for errors in the instructions referred to, it is unimportant to take notice of any other questions raised on the trial or in the argument.

Judgment reversed, and *venire de novo* to issue.

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ROBERT A. PARKER and MILES WHITE, Appellants, v. WILLIAM OVERMAN.

18 H. 137.

REMOVAL OF CAUSES FROM STATE COURTS—TAX SALES.

1. In a proceeding in a State court, however special or summary it may be, these constitute no objection to its removal to a federal court by a citizen of another State, who is a proper defendant to the proceedings.
2. In a petition for such removal, he must describe the *citizenship* of the parties; which is not done by giving their residence. The terms "citizen" and "resident" of a State are not synonymous.
3. Where an officer authorized to assess lands for taxation is required to take an oath of office, his assessment made before taking the oath is invalid. If his neglect to file his assessment in proper office and give notice within a time specified by statute are material, a sale and deed made by him will, for these reasons, be set aside in chancery.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the district of Arkansas.

It was a proceeding under a special statute of that State to have the deed of a purchaser at a tax sale decreed to be valid, and to quiet the title against all persons.

It was instituted by a petition and a notice published in a newspaper, warning all persons interested to come in and defend their rights. The appellant, a citizen of Tennessee, appeared and prayed the removal of the case into the circuit court of the United States, where it proceeded to decree against him.

The remaining facts are sufficiently stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. William Bryan*, for appellant.

*Mr. Lawrence*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [\* 139]

As some doubts were entertained, and have been expressed by some members of the court, as to its jurisdiction in this case, \* it will be necessary to notice that [\* 140] subject before proceeding to examine the merits of the

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controversy. It had its origin in the State court of Dallas county, Arkansas, sitting in chancery. It is a proceeding under a statute of Arkansas, prescribing a special remedy for the confirmation of sales of land by a sheriff or other public officer. Its object is to quiet the title. The purchaser at such sales is authorized to institute proceedings by a public notice in some newspaper, describing the land, stating the authority under which it was sold, and "calling on all persons who can set up any right to the lands so purchased, in consequence of any informality, or any irregularity or illegality connected with the sale, to show cause why the sale so made should not be confirmed."

In case no one appears to contest the regularity of the sale, the court is required to confirm it, on finding certain facts to exist. But if opposition be made, and it should appear that the sale was made "contrary to law," it became the duty of the court to annul it. The judgment or decree, in favor of the grantee in the deed, operates "as a complete bar against any and all persons who may thereafter claim such land, in consequence of any informality or illegality in the proceedings."

It is a very great evil in any community to have titles to land insecure and uncertain; and especially in new States, where its result is to retard the settlement and improvement of their vacant lands. Where such lands have been sold for taxes, there is a cloud on the title of both claimants, which deters the settler from purchasing from either. A prudent man will not purchase a lawsuit, or risk the loss of his money and labor upon a litigious title. The act now under consideration was intended to remedy this evil. It is in substance a bill of peace. The jurisdiction of the court over the controversy is founded on the presence of the property; and, like a proceeding *in rem*, it becomes conclusive against the absent claimant, as well as the present contestant. As was said by the court in *Clark v. Smith*, (13 Pet. 203,) with regard to a similar law of Kentucky: "A State has an undoubted power to regulate and protect individual rights to her soil, and declare what shall form a cloud over titles; and having so declared, the courts of the United States, by removing such clouds, are only applying an old practice to a new equity created by the legislature, having its origin in the peculiar condition of the country. The State legislatures have no authority to prescribe forms and modes of proceeding to the courts of the United States; yet having created a right, and at the same time prescribed the remedy to enforce it, if the remedy prescribed be substantially consistent with the ordinary modes of proceeding on the chancery side of the federal courts, no

\* reason exists why it should not be pursued in the same [ \* 141 ] form as in the State court."

In the case before us, the proceeding, though special in its form, is in its nature but the application of a well known chancery remedy; it acts upon the land, and may be conclusive as to the title of a citizen of another State. He is therefore entitled to have his suit tried in this court, under the same condition as in other suits or controversies.

In the petition to remove this case from the State court, there was not a proper averment as to the citizenship of the plaintiff in error. It alleged that Parker "resided" in Tennessee, and White in Maryland. "Citizenship" and "residence" are not synonymous terms; but as the record was afterwards so amended as to show conclusively the citizenship of the parties, the court below had, and this court have, undoubted jurisdiction of the case.

What we have already stated sufficiently shows the nature of the present controversy. The decree appealed from "adjudges the absolute title to the land to pass and be confirmed to, and vest in, said William Overman, his heirs, &c., free, clear, and discharged from the claim of said defendants, and all persons whatsoever; and that the said sale thereof for taxes, so made by the sheriff of Dallas county to said Overman, is hereby confirmed in all things, and said defendants perpetually enjoined from setting up or asserting any claim thereto," &c.

The plaintiffs in error allege that this decree is erroneous, and should have been for defendants below.

Much of the argument of the learned counsel in this case was wasted on the effect to be attributed to the recitals in the deed, and the decision of this court in the case of *Pillow v. Roberts*, 13 How. 472.

That was an action of ejectment, in which this court decided that, under the 96th section of the revenue law, the sheriff's or collector's deed was made *prima facie* evidence of the regularity of the previous proceedings. The effect of that section of the act, and of the decision in that case, was to cast the burden of proof of irregularity in the proceedings on the party contesting the validity of the deed; but as the present controversy is for the purpose of giving an opportunity "to all persons who can set up any right or title to the land so purchased, in consequence of any informality or illegality connected with such sale," to contest its validity, it would be absurd to make the deed, whose validity is in question, conclusive evidence of that fact. Consequently, the statute enacts that in this proceeding "the deed shall be taken and considered by the court as suffi-

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cient evidence of the authority under which said sale was [ \* 142 ] \* made, the description of the land, and the price at which it was purchased. The deed is to be received as *prima facie* evidence of these three facts, and casts the burden of proof as to them on the defendant. The term "sufficient" is evidently used in the statute as a synonym for "*prima facie*," and not for "conclusive."

In judicial sales under the process of a court of general jurisdiction, where the owner of the property is a party to the proceedings, and has an opportunity of contesting their regularity at every step, such objections cannot be heard to invalidate or annul the deed in a collateral suit. But one who claims title to the property of another under summary proceedings where a special power has been executed, as in a case of lands sold for taxes, is bound to show every fact necessary to give jurisdiction and authority to the officer, and a strict compliance with all things required by the statute.

The principal objection to the regularity of the sale in this case, and the only one necessary to be noticed, is, that the land was not legally assessed. A legal assessment is the foundation of the authority to sell; and if this objection be sustained, it is fatal to the deed.

In order to qualify the sheriff to fulfill the duties of assessor, the statute requires that, "on or before the tenth day of January, in each year, the sheriff of each county shall make and file in the office of the clerk of the county an affidavit in the following form," &c.: "And if any sheriff shall neglect to file such affidavit within the time prescribed in the preceding section, his office shall be deemed vacant, and it shall be the duty of the clerk of the county court, without delay, to notify the governor of such vacancy," &c.

The statute requires, also, "that on or before the 25th day of March, in each year, the assessor shall file in the office of the clerk of the county the original assessment, and immediately thereafter give notice that he has filed it," &c. This notice is required, that the owner may appeal to the county court "at the next term after the 25th day of March, and have his assessment corrected, if it be incorrect." If the assessor shall fail to file his assessment within the time specified by this act, he is deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and subjected to a fine of five hundred dollars.

These severe inflictions upon the officer, for his neglect to comply with the exigencies of the act, indicate clearly the importance attached to his compliance in the view of the legislature, and that a neglect of them would vitiate any subsequent proceedings, and put it out of the power of the sheriff to enforce the collection of taxes by a sale of the property.

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The record shows that Peyton S. Bethel, the then sheriff of \* the county of Dallas, did not file his oath as [ \* 143 ] assessor on or before the 10th of January, as required by law. He did file an oath on the 15th of March, but this was not a compliance with the law, and conferred no power on him to act as assessor. On the contrary, by his neglect to comply with the law, his office of sheriff became *ipso facto* vacated, and any assessment made by him in that year was void, and could not be the foundation for a legal sale. The neglect, also, to file his assessment and give immediate notice on the 25th of March, so that the purchaser might have his appeal at the next county court, was an irregularity which would have avoided the sale even if the assessment had been legally made.

The statute makes the time within which these acts were to be performed material; and a strict and exact compliance with its requirements is a condition precedent to the vesting of any authority in the officer to sell.

We are of opinion, therefore, that the sale of the land of the appellants was "contrary to law," and that the deed from Edward M. Harris, sheriff and collector of Dallas county, to William Overman, set forth and described in the pleadings and exhibits of this case, is void, and should be annulled.

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EDWARD C. RICHARDS and others, Appellants, v. SYLVANUS HOLMES  
and others, Appellees.

18 H. 143.

SALES UNDER TRUST DEEDS.

1. Under the authority conferred by the deed of trust in this case, the trustee was authorized to sell for an installment of interest due and unpaid, though the principal sum was not due.
2. And this is so, though the deed did not show that any interest was due before the note became due, the note being referred to in the deed.
3. An authority to sell, after advertising the time and place of sale, authorizes the trustee, in the exercise of a sound discretion, to postpone the sale more than once, if due notice is given of the postponement.
4. The holder of the note secured by the deed may leave a bid with the auctioneer, and if it is the highest bid that can be obtained, his purchase will be valid.
5. A payee of a note may, without endorsing it, transfer it by a separate instrument, and his liability will be governed exclusively by the covenants of that instrument.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the District of Columbia.

The case is very fully stated in the opinion of the court.

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*Mr. Bibb*, for appellants.

*Mr. Fendall* and *Mr. Tracy*, for appellees.

*Mr. Bradley*, for Southworth *et al.*, assignees.

[ \* 145 ] \* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court for the District of Columbia. The appellants filed their bill in that court to set aside a sale, made to satisfy a prior incumbrance on land, upon which they claimed to have a second incumbrance. In the court below, some question appears to have been made concerning the priority of the incumbrances; but none is made here, it being conceded, that though that claimed by the complainants was the earliest in date, the other was first recorded, and takes precedence.

The sale in question was made under a deed of trust, whereby Holmes, the debtor, conveyed to the defendant, Philip R. Fendall, in trust to secure the payment of a promissory note, bearing date May 1, 1846, payable in two years from date, for \$2,800 and interest, payable annually.

It is objected that the sale, which was made on the 21st of October, 1847, after one year's interest had become due, but before the principal sum was payable, was premature. This depends upon the meaning and effect of the power of sale contained in the deed. It was competent for the parties to agree to a foreclosure by sale for non-payment of interest, and the question is, whether they did so agree. The event in which the trustee is empowered to sell, is thus described in the deed:

“But if the hereinbefore described promissory note, with the interest legally due thereon, shall not be fully paid off and discharged when said note shall be due and payable, and payment of the same shall be demanded, or if any note or notes given in substitution for or renewal of the hereinbefore described promissory note shall not be fully paid off and discharged according to the tenor and effect of the said substitute or new note or notes, together with the interest legally due on such substitute or note or notes, so that any default be made in payment of any part of

[ \* 146 ] \* the aforesaid debt of two thousand eight hundred dollars and interest, then so soon after such default,” &c.

The omission to pay the first year's interest was a default within the express words of this power. That interest was part of the interest secured by the note, and a failure to pay it was a “default in payment of part of the aforesaid interest.” The deed author-

izes the trustee to sell for any such default, and, consequently, the sale was not premature.

It was argued that the trust deed does not describe the note as bearing annual interest, and, consequently, that the subsequent incumbrancer has a right to insist that, as against him, there was no power to sell for non-payment of such interest.

It is true the deed does not purport to describe the interest which is to become due on the note; but it clearly shows that it bore interest at some rate, and payable at some time or times, and this was sufficient to put a subsequent incumbrancer on inquiry as to what the rate of interest and the time or times of its payment were. The deed, in effect, declares, and its record gives notice to subsequent purchasers, that its purpose is to secure the payment of such interest as has been reserved by the note; the amount, and date, and time of payment of which are mentioned. We do not think the mere omission to describe in the deed what that interest was to be, is a defect of which advantage can be taken by the complainants.

The complainants further insist that the property was not duly advertised. The provision in the deed of trust upon this subject is as follows: "It shall be the duty of the said Philip R. Fendall or his heirs to enter upon the hereinbefore conveyed piece or parcel of ground and appurtenances, and sell the same at public auction to the highest bidder, or at private sale, for cash or credit, according to his or their discretion, after having given public notice of such sale, by advertisement, at least thirty days previously thereto, in the National Intelligencer, or in some other newspaper printed or published in the city of Washington aforesaid."

Inasmuch as the trustee was empowered to sell at private sale, as well as at public auction, his power extended to a private sale made at any time after thirty days' notice. Having given notice for the space of thirty days that he was about to sell the property, he might, at any time after the expiration of that thirty days, have proceeded to sell it at private sale. But this notice should be such as to call for purchasers at private sale. The notice given was of a sale at public auction. This did not call for purchasers, except at the time and place mentioned in the notice. No sale was made at the time and place designated in the thirty days' notice published in the National Intelligencer. \*At that time [\* 147] and place the attendance of bidders was so small, that the trustee believed an attempt to sell for a fair price would be fruitless; and he adjourned the sale for the space of fourteen days, giving notice of such adjournment in the same newspaper of the next day.



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At the time and place thus fixed for the adjourned sale another postponement took place, for the same reasons, for one week; and the place of sale was changed from the premises to the rooms of the auctioneer. Of this postponement, also, public notice was given on the next day, in the same newspaper.

There is no reason to suspect the least unfairness on the part of the trustee, or any one concerned. His conduct seems to have been dictated solely by an honest desire to obtain the best price for the property. Nor is there any ground for believing that either of these postponements prejudiced the interest of the complainants. They stand upon the objection, that though the trustee might have sold on the first day, of which thirty days' notice was given, he could not on that day adjourn the sale.

But we consider that a power to a trustee to sell at public auction, after a certain public notice of the time and place of sale, includes the power regularly to adjourn the sale to a different time and place, when, in his discretion fairly exercised, it shall seem to him necessary to do so in order to obtain the fair auction price for the property.

If he has not this power, the elements or many unexpected occurrences may prevent an attendance of bidders, and cause an inevitable sacrifice of the property. It is a power which every prudent owner would exercise in his own behalf under the circumstances supposed, and which he may well be presumed to intend to confer on another. This power of sale does not undertake to prescribe the particular manner of making the sale. It is to be at public auction, and "after having given public notice of such sale by advertisement at least thirty days;" but it assumes that the sale will be conducted as such sales are usually conducted. A sale regularly adjourned, so as to give notice to all persons present of the time and place to which it is adjourned, is, when made, in effect the sale of which previous public notice was given.

The courts of several States have gone further in this direction than we find necessary, though we do not intend to intimate any doubt of the correctness of their decisions. They have held that a public officer, upon whom a power of sale is conferred by law, may adjourn an advertised public sale to a different time and place, for the purpose of obtaining a better price for the property. *Tinkom v. Purdy*, 5 Johns. 345; *Russell v. Richards*, 11 Maine, 371; *Lantz v. Worthington*, 4 Barr, 153; *Warren v. Leland*, 9

Mass. 265. If such a power is implied where the law, [ \* 148 ] acting *\* in invitum*, selects the officer, *à fortiori* it may be presumed to be granted to a trustee selected by the parties.

The remaining objection is, that the defendant Harper, the creditor for whose benefit the sale was made, through the trustee, requested the auctioneer to bid for him the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars; that the auctioneer did so, and there being no higher bid, the property was struck off to Harper. It is insisted that this renders the sale void.

We do not deem it necessary to examine the numerous and somewhat conflicting decisions upon the subject of by-bidding, or bidding by persons standing in fiduciary capacities. This case stands clear of those decisions and of the principles upon which they rest. No decision lays down a positive rule that such sales, though affected by such bidding, are, *per se*, and as between all persons, void. They may be avoided by parties whose just interests have been injuriously affected by such misconduct, provided the rights of innocent third persons are not thereby disturbed.

It was for the advantage of these complainants, as subsequent incumbrancers, that this property should sell for the best price which could be obtained. Even improper practices to enhance the price, if any such had been resorted to, could not be complained of by them. It is only some practice to prevent bidding, or procure a sale for less than the property would have otherwise brought, which can be relied on by them to avoid the sale. We have no doubt the creditor, for the satisfaction of whose debt the sale was made, had a right to compete fairly at the sale; but whether he had or not, his doing so could not be injurious to the complainants.

It is true he employed the auctioneer to bid for him; but this fact alone could not depreciate the price. Such an authority may be used for fraudulent purposes; but, if fairly used, its tendency is to enhance the price; and in this case there is no evidence that it was intended to be, or in fact was, unfairly used. On the contrary, there seems to be no room for doubt that the price bid by the auctioneer for Harper was more than any other person was willing to give. It must be remembered, that the auctioneer was not employed as the agent of the creditor to purchase the property for him at the least price at which it could be obtained. Such an agency an auctioneer should not undertake. It is inconsistent with his relation to the seller, and with the faithful discharge of his duty to the seller.

But an agency simply to bid a particular sum for a purchaser, amounting to no more than receiving from the purchaser, before the auction, a bid which is to be treated as if made there by the purchaser himself, is not necessarily inconsistent with any duty

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[ \* 149 ] \* of the auctioneer, and does not enable any one to avoid the sale.

And the same remark applies to the trustee. It was his duty to obtain for the property the best price he could by the use of due diligence in a fair sale. It would have been improper for him, in behalf of the creditor, to employ the auctioneer to buy at anything short of that best price. But there was no impropriety in his employing him to bid a particular sum for the creditor, to prevent a sacrifice of the property.

We have considered all the objections to this sale made by the complainants, and finding neither of them valid, the decree of the court below is, in that respect, affirmed.

As to so much of the complainants' bill as seeks relief against their assignors, in the event of not obtaining satisfaction from the land, we are of opinion that these assignors are under no such liability as is asserted by the complainants. The complainants purchased a negotiable note which was overdue. The assignors did not indorse it, but simply assigned it by deed. They entered into certain specific covenants concerning the subject-matter assigned; and their liability depends exclusively on these covenants. Neither of these covenants appears to have been broken. The only one concerning which any doubt has been raised is the following:

“And we do in like manner covenant, promise, and agree, that the said note of three thousand dollars, hereinbefore assigned, shall be and is entitled to payment out of any sale of the premises conveyed in and by the deed of trust aforesaid, before the other note therein specified, and shall have a prior lien on the said premises, or the proceeds thereof.”

We think the purpose and effect of this covenant was, not to secure payment out of any sale which might be made by any party under any title to the premises, but only to assure the priority of payment of the note assigned, in preference to the other note, out of any sale made under the particular title to the premises described in the deed of assignment.

The covenant that the note assigned is due, is shown to have been kept by the note itself, in the absence of other evidence. The answer admits the receipt of moneys from the maker on account of other debts, but denies any payment on account of this note; and there is no evidence to the contrary.

The decree of the circuit court is affirmed, with costs.

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Jones v. Johnston.

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WILLIAM JONES and SYLVESTER MARSH, Plaintiffs in Error, v.  
WILLIAM S. JOHNSTON.

18 H. 150.

## ALLUVIAL ACCRETIONS—REFERENCE TO PLAT IN A DEED.

1. Where a lot is conveyed by a reference to a plat recorded in the proper office, the contesting party also claiming by a deed referring to the same plat as recorded, the original of the recorded plat cannot be received as evidence to show that the one recorded was erroneous.
2. Nor is it material that the plat is not recorded in accordance with the statutes regulating that matter. The reference for purpose of description is to *that plat*, and the formalities prescribed by law for its record do not affect it as a means of identifying the boundaries.
3. If there was in fact an error in the plat, so that it did not describe the land *intended* to be conveyed, this could only be corrected in chancery.
4. Accretions by gradual deposits to land with a water front, made after a plan of the lots is platted, do not pass to a purchaser from the proprietor, unless the description is such as to include them. It does not pass as appurtenant to the lot as originally laid out.
5. In deciding the claim of plaintiffs to a water front, and to accretions thereto, the condition of the water front, as regards his lot, *at the time he recorded his deed*, is to be considered, and not at the time the plat was made.
6. In case the lot had a water front at the time plaintiff recorded his deed, then the rule of ascertaining his share of the accretion is laid down in the opinion, but cannot be epitomized here. *Banks v. Ogden*, 2 Wall. 57.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the northern district of Illinois.

It concerns the title to alluvion, as between owners of two adjoining lots.

The case is stated in the opinion, so as to be as clear as it can be made without diagrams.

*Mr. Scammon and Mr. Johnston*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Chase*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 151 ]

This is a writ of error to the circuit court of the United States for the district of Illinois.

The suit below was an action of ejectment, brought by Johnston, against Jones and Marsh, to recover a tract of alluvial land in the city of Chicago, formed in Lake Michigan, adjoining the north pier of Chicago harbor, and which is claimed as an accretion to water lot No. 34, in Kinzie's addition. The defendant, Jones, is owner of Lot No. 35, in said addition, lying east, and adjoining 34, and between that and the lake.

Both parties claim under Robert A. Kinzie, the patentee of the north fractional section 10, in township 39, which was situate in the bend of the Chicago river, at its mouth, and bounded southerly by that river, and easterly by the Michigan lake. Kinzie, the patentee, in February, 1833, laid out an addition to the town of Chicago upon this fractional section, and made a plat of the same, which was recorded in the recorder's office of the county, on the 18th of January, 1834, according to the requirements of the laws of the State of Illinois. On this plat, lot No. 34, is one of

[ \* 152 ] a series of water lots, bounded \* on the south side of North Water street, sixty feet, as its northerly boundary, and is included within lines dropped from the fixed corners on that street at right angles with the same, and extended until they intersect the lake shore. Lot No. 35 is the next lot east, of the same width, on Water street, and extended in like manner to the lake, its west line being the east line of 34.

On the 25th of February, 1833, R. A. Kinzie conveyed to John H. Kinzie several lots in this addition, and among others, lot No. 35. And on the 1st September, 1834, John H. conveyed the same to Jones, the defendant, describing it in the deed as in Kinzie's addition, and as "being water lot No. 35," &c., "agreeably to the town plat, recorded in the office of the recorder of the said county of Cook, to which reference may be had if necessary."

On the 22d of October, 1835, R. A. Kinzie conveyed to Johnston, the plaintiff, lot No. 34, describing it as lying in Kinzie's addition, and known as water lot No. 34, "as will more fully appear, reference being had to said plat as recorded in the recorder's office of the town of Chicago, in the county of Cook," &c.

In the summer of 1833, the general government commenced the construction of the harbor of the city of Chicago, which is formed by an erection of two piers across this fractional section 10, from the curve of the Chicago river, as it takes a direction southerly to the lake, and for a considerable distance into the lake, the effect of which was to turn the river from its sweep southerly across the sand bar to the waters of the lake between the two piers, and thus opening a passage for vessels into the town.

The south pier was built in 1833, and the north in 1834. The harbor thus constructed, divided several of the lots in Kinzie's addition that bounded on Water street, east and west, and, among others, as is claimed by the defendant, No. 34, leaving a part of it as originally laid out, south of the harbor.

Since the construction of the harbor and extension of the piers into the waters of the lake, the shore above, or north of the piers,

has greatly changed, the firm land having increased by the washing up of sand and earth, and the recession of the waters to the extent of some twelve hundred feet in width, and for a considerable distance in length northward along the shore. The present suit is brought to recover a portion of this alluvion or new-formed land, as an increment or accession to lot No. 34. The plaintiff claims that a part of its southern termination on the lake was north of the piers, and contiguous to the new-formed land, and therefore entitled to its share of the increment. The defendant contends that no part of its boundary was on \* the lake north of the [ \* 153 ] harbor, and therefore no part connected with or adjoining this land newly formed. On the contrary, that part of his own lot, No. 35, which lies between 34 and the lake, was bounded on the lake south of the north pier, and hence cut off No. 34 from any portion of the alluvial accession.

The plaintiff insisted, on the trial, that the plat of Kinzie's addition, as recorded in the recorder's office in January, 1834, was incorrect, and produced what was claimed to be the original, but which was not recorded when the conveyances of the lots in question were executed. According to this original plat, as the side lines were laid down, lot No. 34 appeared to be partially bounded on the lake north of the harbor. In this respect it differed from the plat recorded; as, according to the side lines as there extended, its entire boundary on the lake was south of the harbor.

In laying out the addition by the surveyor in 1833, the only lines of the lots run out or measured on the ground were those butting on Water street, the north lines of the lots. The side lines depend upon their protraction on the plat of the addition; and which, as we have already said, were formed by dropping them at right angles from the corners on Water street, and extending them till they intersected the lake. And even the lake shore, as laid down on the plat—as appears from the testimony of the surveyor—was ascertained without survey or measurement, and with little more accuracy than could be obtained from the eye.

The case was a good deal embarrassed on the trial, arising out of the evidence in respect to this original plat, and some consideration and effect were given to it by the court in submitting it to the jury. We think the court erred in admitting it as evidence to control, or in any way to affect the recorded plat. Both lots in controversy were conveyed with express reference to that, and without such reference there is not a sufficient description given in the deeds of the boundaries to admit of a location of either.

If there was in fact any error or mistake in this reference, by way



of description of the premises conveyed, the remedy was in chancery to reform the deed. So long as that remained unreformed, the description of the lot by the reference to the recorded plat was conclusive upon the parties.

The acts of the State of Illinois regulating the laying out of town lots, and the recording of the plats of the same, were supposed by the court below to have a bearing upon the questions involved, and influenced the instructions given and refused to the jury. It seemed to be admitted that the plat recorded did not conform in all respects to the requirement of the statutes.

[ \* 154 ] \* But it is not pretended that the omission in any way operated to invalidate the deeds, or affect prejudicially the rights of the parties under them. Both parties stand upon the same footing in this respect, as each claims under the same survey of the town, and by reference to the same plat. We do not perceive that these acts of the State have any material bearing upon the case, and should not have been allowed to influence the trial. If the description in the deeds was sufficiently certain, by a reference to the plat on record, to identify and locate the lots, the title passed to the grantees, whether the plat conformed to the acts of the legislature or not. This is all that was material so far as the plat is concerned.

The court, in instructing the jury, observed that the controversy turned upon the length of the line dividing lot 34 from 35, before the north pier was constructed—that whether in point of fact it touched the shore of the lake before it reached the pier, or the place where the pier was; in other words, whether there was any water line of lot 34 north of the north pier, and if so, what was the extent of the water line.

Again, the court charged, after adverting to the recorded plat, and to the question whether or not it was made in conformity to the statutes of Illinois, that if the jury should find the plat was not so made and recorded, then they should determine, under all the evidence in the case, whether or not, prior to the construction of the north pier, the dividing line between lots 34 and 35 touched the water at a point north of where the north pier was subsequently placed; if it did, then the court was of opinion that the owner of 34 had a right to follow the water as the accretions were formed on his water line.

In these instructions we think the court erred.

As we have seen, this lot No. 34 was conveyed to the plaintiff the 22d October, 1835, and described as included within side lines dropped at right angles from the northwest and northeast corners on Water street, which were sixty feet apart, and fixed, and extended



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in right lines till they intersected the shore of the lake below. The boundaries, therefore, including and locating the lot, were specific and complete. The north boundary was marked on the south side of Water street; the side lines extended according to the plat at right angles from Water street to the lake; the lake was the southern boundary which closed the lines of the lot.

Now, in order to determine what land was conveyed to the plaintiff by his deed of 22d October, 1835, all that was necessary was to locate the lot upon the ground in conformity to the description at that date. The calls in the deed having reference to the plat, furnished the necessary data for the location. There  
\* was the fixed line north on the ground, the lake, a [\* 155] natural object south, and the lot enclosed between two lines extending at right angles from the corners on Water street to the lake.

If the call for the southern boundary, instead of being a lake, which is a shifting line, had been a permanent object, such as a street or wall, there could not be two opinions as to the location. And yet the water line, though it may gradually and imperceptibly change, is just as fixed a boundary in the eye of the law as the former. I speak not now of sudden and considerable changes, which are governed by different principles.

The court below, as appears from the instructions referred to, assumed that lot No. 34 should be located on the ground as of the time of the survey and plat of February, 1833, some two years and nine months previous to the conveyance to the plaintiff, and not at the date of that conveyance; and if at that time the dividing line between 34 and 35 would strike the lake north of where the north pier of the harbor was subsequently built, so as to give a like boundary at that time above the pier, the plaintiff would be enabled to take under his deed not only lot 34, as laid down on the plat, but all subsequent accretions by alluvion or dereliction, whatever might be the extent of the new-formed land. By the like assumption and process of reasoning, if the present plaintiff should convey the lot with the same specific boundaries, the north line sixty feet on Water street, and side lines extending at right angles to the lake, the deed would carry with it the whole of the new-made land outside the lines of the deed which is now in dispute—it being a tract from one hundred and thirty to two hundred and twenty-two feet one way, and some twelve hundred the other.

Now, one answer to this assumption is, that a grantee can acquire by his deed only the lands described in it by metes and bounds, and with sufficient certainty to enable a person of reason-

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able skill to locate it, and cannot acquire lands outside of the description by way of appurtenance or accession.

Lord Coke says: "A thing corporeal cannot properly be appurtenant to a thing corporeal, nor a thing incorporeal to a thing incorporeal." Coke Litt. 121, B.

And this court, in *Harris et al. v. Elliot*, 10 Pet. 54, after approving of the maxim of Coke, observed that, according to this rule, land cannot be appurtenant to land. In the case of *Jackson v. Hathaway*, 15 Johns. R. 454, the court say, a mere easement may, without express words, pass as an incident to the principal object of the grant; but it would be absurd to allow the fee of one piece of land not mentioned in the deed to pass as appurtenant to another distinct parcel which is expressly granted by precise and definite boundaries. See also 7 Mass. 6.

[ \* 156 ] \* Land gained from the sea either by alluvion or dereliction, if the same be by little and little, by small and imperceptible degrees, belongs to the owner of the land adjoining. 2 Bl. Com. 261-2. If, therefore, the rule be as supposed by the court below, that the boundaries of lot 34 must be taken as it would have been located at the time of the plat, and the southern limit to stop at the water line as it then existed, and the subsequent gain by alluvion or dereliction to pass as appurtenant to the land conveyed, the grantee would find it difficult upon this construction to reach the lake at all. Certainly he could not, if the water line as it then existed is to be deemed the southern limit, as described in his deed, provided alluvial accretions had taken place between the survey and plat and the date of the deed. The land thus formed belonged to the adjoining owner for the time being, and we have seen that the deed would not pass it as appurtenant or incidental to the land granted.

But the true answer to the position assumed, and which governed the trial below, is, that the water boundary on the lake is to be deemed the true southern boundary of the lot at the date of the conveyance, as much so as North Water street was its northern boundary. And the plaintiff is carried by his deed to it, not because of the alluvial deposit, if any, between the water line at the time of the survey and plat and the line at the date of the deed, having passed as appurtenant to the lot, but because one of the calls given in the deed requires that the side lines should be thus extended. Any alluvial accretions since the deed belong to the plaintiff as owner of the adjoining land. Any past accretions belonged to the then owner, and whoever sets up a title to them must show a deed of the same, as in the case of any other description of land.

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Jones v. Johnston.

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The case of Robert M. Lamb v. Thomas C. Rickets, 11 Ohio, 311, exemplifies the principle for which we are contending. The defendant had agreed to convey a piece of land called the Hamlin lot, containing forty-two acres more or less, and also two other small lots of ten acres, with a proviso if the Hamlin lot and the two others contained more than fifty-two acres, the excess was reserved. The defendant conveyed the Hamlin lot, and refused to convey the other two. A bill was filed to compel a conveyance. The Hamlin lot was bounded by one of its lines on the bank of the Tuscarawas river, and had been originally conveyed to the defendant, and by him to the plaintiff, as containing forty-two acres more or less.

The defense set up to the bill was, that before the defendant conveyed the lot to the plaintiff large accessions had been made from the river to the lot, and that these alluvial formations made up the quantity of fifty-two acres.

\*The plaintiff claimed that the quantity should be [\*157] determined according to the old boundary of the lot upon the bank of the river, which would be but some forty-two acres. But the court held that the question was not as the bank of the river was twenty-five or thirty years ago, but as it was when the Hamlin tract was conveyed to the plaintiff, and estimated the quantity of land conveyed accordingly.

The case of Giraud's Lessee v. Hughes *et al.* 1 Gill & Johnson, 249, asserts a similar principle. There Gist's inspection, a grant as early as 1732, was bounded by one of its lines in the waters of the Patapsco river, afterwards a basin of Baltimore; the lines, however, were given in the grant by courses and distances, and did not call for the river. Hughes held under this grant by deed in 1782.

Before 1812, the waters of the Patapsco had gradually receded, and formed a body of firm land, which had been surveyed and patented by the State to the plaintiff. The question was, whether or not Hughes was entitled to this alluvial deposit as the adjoining owner to the river. It was not doubted by the counsel or court but that, if the grant of Gist's inspection had been bounded on the river, this boundary of the tract would have included the land made by the recession of the water; and the court even held, that as the original location of the tract extended into the river, it entitled those holding under it to the land, on the ground that the principle governing these alluvial accretions gave them to the adjoining owner. In other words, the description in the original grant gave, in legal effect, to the grantee, a water boundary; and if so, the boundary included the accretions.

The jury, therefore, in this case, should have been directed to inquire whether or not, at the time of the deed to the plaintiff, lot No. 34 had a water line upon the lake north of the pier of the Chicago harbor; in other words, whether the line between that lot and No. 35 struck the shore of the lake before it reached this pier. If it did, then the question would properly arise in respect to its right to a share of the alluvial accretions formed since that period. If it did not, then no question of the kind could arise in the case.

We think the court also erred in the rule laid down to govern the jury in the division of the new-made land. That was, the jury should ascertain the extent of the water line of 34 between the piers and the point where the line dividing 34 and 35 touched the water. They should also ascertain the extent of the water line of the fraction of land south of North Water street and east of 35, and also of 35 to the point dividing 34 and 35; they [ \* 158 ] would then have the plaintiffs' and the defendant's \* front on the lake. They must then ascertain the front on the lake shore, as it at present exists, and divide that into as many equal parts as there are feet on the old shore from North Water street to the piers, and give to each of the parties as many of these parts as he had feet on the old shore, and then draw a straight line from the point of division on the old lake shore to the point thus determined as the point of division on the present one.

We do not perceive why North Water street should have been adopted as the northern limit upon the old shore, as the basis in making the division, as it appears from the evidence and maps that the alluvial accretions extended much further north. The northern limit on the old shore should have been carried as far as the new-made land extended, as each riparian proprietor was entitled to his proper share, and it was essential that the entire line be regarded, in order that each might obtain his proportional part. Neither do we perceive any reason for excluding the pier shore of the lake—that is, the shore along the line of the piers—from measurement, in ascertaining the extent of the newly-made shore.

If we disregard the artificial construction which occasioned the accretions, the lake there is as much new shore as any other portion of it, and should have been taken into the estimate.

As no question was made below whether or not the alluvial accretions in question were formed under such circumstances as gave to adjoining owners a title to them, we do not intend to express any opinion upon that question.

The judgment of the court below is reversed, with directions that a *venire de novo* issue.

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Griffith v. Bogert.

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JOSIAH S. GRIFFITH and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. JOHN B. BOGERT and others.

18 H. 158.

COMPUTATION OF TIME BETWEEN ONE PERIOD AND ANOTHER.

1. A statute of Missouri forbid a sale under execution of lands of decedent until eighteen months after letters of administration granted. This was done on the 1st day of November, 1819, and the sale made by order of court on the 1st day of May, 1821. Held to be a compliance with the statute.
2. There is no settled rule as to whether the first or the last day of the two periods shall be included in the computation; and courts will construe the matter so as to confirm, and not overthrow, rights acquired in good faith under a fair transaction.
3. The order of the court directing the sale on that day is a judicial decision of the question, binding on the parties to this suit, and the court making the order having jurisdiction, it cannot be assailed collaterally.

ERROR to the circuit court for the district of Missouri. The case is well stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Crittenden*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Geyer*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [\* 161]

The plaintiffs claim the land which is the subject of controversy in this suit, as heirs of Isaac W. Griffith, who died seized of the same in 1819. His estate was insolvent. Judgments were obtained against his administrators in 1820, executions were issued thereon, and the property sold by the sheriff. The defendants claim under the purchaser at this sale.

On the trial, the court below instructed the jury "that the sheriff's deed, read in evidence under the judgments and executions also in evidence, was effectual to divest the title of the heirs of Isaac H. Griffith to the land mentioned in said deed."

It is admitted, that in the State of Missouri the lands of a deceased debtor may be taken in execution, and sold by the sheriff, in satisfaction of a judgment against the administrator. And also that such deed vests in the purchaser all the estate and interest which the deceased had in the property at the time of his death. But it is alleged that this sale is "without authority of law and void," because the execution was issued and sale made before the time limited for stay of execution against the  
\* real estate of a decedent. The law and the facts, on [\* 162] which this objection to the validity of the sale is founded, are as follows:

By an act of 1817, it is provided that "all lands, tenements, and hereditaments shall be liable to be seized or sold upon judgment and execution obtained against the defendant or defendants, in full life, or against his or her heirs, executors, or administrators, after the decease of the testate, or intestate; provided, no such land, tenements, or hereditaments, shall be seized and sold until after the expiration of eighteen months from the death of such ancestor, or the date of the letters testamentary or letters of administration, and execution may issue against such lands, tenements, and hereditaments, after the death, testate or intestate, and after the time aforesaid, in the same manner, as if such person were living."

The letters of administration on the estate of Griffith are dated on the 1st of November, 1819. The sale was made by the sheriff on the 1st of May, 1821, on executions previously issued.

It is contended that the term of eighteen months from the 1st of November, 1819, had not expired on the 1st of May, 1821, and consequently the sale was without authority of law, and void.

But we are of opinion that the assumption on which this inference is based, is not correct; nor the inference correct, if the assumption were granted.

If the day on which the letters of administration be counted in the calculation, the term of eighteen months had "expired" on the 1st of May, 1821.

Whether the *terminus a quo* should be so included, it must be admitted, has been a vexed question for many centuries, both among learned doctors of the civil law and the courts of England and this country. It has been termed by a writer on civil law (Tiraqueau) the *controversia controversissima*.

In common and popular usage, the day *a quo* has always been included, and such has been the general rule both of the Roman and common law. The latter admits no fractions of a day; the former, in some instances, as in cases of minority, calculated *de momento en momentum*. The result of this subdivision was to comprehend a part of the *terminus a quo*. But in cases where fractions of a day were not admitted, as in those of usucaption or prescription, a possession commencing on the 1st of January, and ending on the 31st of December, was counted a full year. It was in consequence of the uncertainty introduced on this subject by the disquisitions and disputes of learned professors, that Gregory IX., in his decretals, introduced the phrase of "a year and a [ \* 163 ] day," in order to remove the doubts thus created, as \* to whether the *dies a quo* should be included in the term.



It thus maintained the correctness of the common usage, while it satisfied the doubts of the doctors.

The earlier cases at common law show the adoption of the popular usage as the general rule, but many exceptions were introduced in its application to leases, limitations, &c., where a forfeiture would ensue. But the cases are conflicting, and have established no fixed rule as to such exceptions. Lord Mansfield reviews the cases before his time, in *Pugh v. Leeds*, Cowp. 714, and comes to the conclusion "that the cases for two hundred years had only served to embarrass a point which a plain man of common sense and understanding would have no difficulty in construing."

The rule he lays down in that case is, "that courts of justice ought to construe the words of parties so as to effectuate their deeds, and not destroy them; and that, 'from' the date, may in vulgar use, and even in strict propriety of language, mean either inclusive or exclusive."

It would be tedious and unprofitable to attempt a review of the very numerous modern decisions, or to lay down any rules applicable to all cases. Every case must depend on its own circumstances. Where the construction of the language of a statute is doubtful, courts will always prefer that which will confirm rather than destroy any *bona fide* transaction or title. The intention and policy of the enactment should be sought for and carried out. Courts should never indulge in nice grammatical criticism of prepositions or conjunctions, in order to destroy rights honestly acquired.

In the present case there is no reason for departing from the general rule and popular usage of treating the day from which the term is to be calculated, or "*terminus a quo*," as inclusive. The object of the legislature was to give a stay of execution for eighteen months, in order that the administrator might have an opportunity of collecting the assets of the deceased and applying them to the discharge of his debts. The day on which the letters issue may be used for this purpose as effectually as any other in the year. The rights of the creditor to execution are restrained by the act, for the benefit of the debtor's estate. The administrator has had the number of days allowed to him by the statute to collect his assets and pay the debts. The construction which would exclude the day of the date is invoked, not to avoid a forfeiture or confirm a title, but to destroy one, obtained by a purchaser in good faith under the sanction of a public judicial sale.

If the statute in question were one of limitation, whereby the remedy of the creditor would have been lost, unless execution



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[ \*164 ] \* had issued and sale been made within the eighteen months, probably a different construction might have prevailed. Yet, even in such a case, the precedents conflict. (See *Cornell v. Moulton*, 3 Denio, 12; and *Presbury v. Williams*, 15 Mass. 193.)

But, if the correct application of the rule to the present case were doubtful, the fact that this question was raised and decided by the court between the parties to the judgment, and that the court, after considering the question, ordered the sale to be made on the 1st of May, would be conclusive, not only as *res judicata inter partes*, but as evidence of the received construction by the courts of Missouri, which it would be an abuse of judicial discretion now to overturn.

Finally, there is another view of the case which is conclusive, as regards this and all other objections taken by the counsel to the validity of the sheriff's deed. It is the well known and established rule of law in Missouri and elsewhere, that a judicial sale and title acquired under the proceedings of a court of competent jurisdiction cannot be questioned collaterally, except in case of fraud, in which the purchaser was a participant. (See *Grignon v. Astor*, 2 How. 319.) The cases of *Reed v. Austin*, 9 Mo. R. 722; of *Landes v. Perkins*, 12 Mo. 239; *Carson v. Walker*, 16 Mo. 68; and *Draper v. Bryson*, 17 Mo. 71, show that this principle of the common law is the received and established doctrine of the courts of Missouri.

The sheriff's deed in the present case is founded on a regular judgment in a court of competent jurisdiction, and an execution on said judgment issued by authority of the court, and levied on property subject by law to be taken and sold to satisfy the judgment. The writ authorized the sheriff to sell; a sale was made in pursuance thereof by the sheriff, and a deed executed to the purchaser, which was afterwards acknowledged in open court according to law. At this time, all parties interested could and would have been heard to allege any irregularity in the proceedings that would justify the court in setting it aside. The objections to this sale do not reach the power of the court, or the authority of the sheriff to sell. The issuing of an execution on a judgment before the stay of execution has elapsed, or after a year and day without reviving the judgment, the want of proper advertisements by the sheriff, and other like irregularities, may be sufficient ground for setting aside the execution or sale, on motion of a party to the suit, or any one interested in the proceedings; but when the objections are waived by them, and the judicial sale

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founded on these proceedings is confirmed by the court, it would be injurious to the peace of the community and the security of titles to permit such objections to the title to be heard in a collateral action.

\* On every view of the case, we are of opinion that the [ \* 165 ] title of the purchaser is protected by the established rules of law, and that there was no error in the instructions given to the jury by the court below.

The judgment of the circuit court is therefore affirmed.

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EDWIN C. LITTLE and OLIVER SCOVILL, Appellants, v. LEVI W. HALL and others.

18 H. 165.

COPYRIGHT IN REPORTS OF DECISIONS—CONTRACT OF PUBLISHER WITH REPORTER.

1. Under the statute of New York, in virtue of which Comstock was appointed reporter of the decisions of the court of appeals, no copyright could be had in the reports.
2. The contract of the reporter with a publishing house for the exclusive right to publish for his five years of office, did not confer on them any right to the manuscripts prepared by him for such reports; and no injunction could be issued by a federal court by virtue of the copyright acts of congress to prevent others from publishing them.
3. If plaintiffs have any remedy, it is by a personal action against Comstock on the contract.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the northern district of New York, and the case is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Seward*, for appellants.

*Mr. Haven*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 169 ]

This is an appeal from the decree of the circuit court of the United States for the northern district of New York.

A want of jurisdiction to sustain this appeal was alleged by counsel, as it does not appear from the record that the amount in controversy exceeds the sum of two thousand dollars; but this objection was obviated by an affidavit, which stated that the amount claimed by the plaintiffs exceeds that sum.

This bill was filed under the copyright act, to enjoin the defendants from publishing and selling the fourth volume of Comstock's Reports.

The plaintiffs, who are publishers and booksellers at Albany, New York, represent that, on the 20th of April, 1850, they entered

into an agreement with Washington Hunt, comptroller, Christopher Morgan, secretary, and George F. Comstock, reporter, of the State of New York, as required by statute, that they should have the publication, for the term of five years, of the decisions of the court of appeals, and the exclusive benefit of the copyright, to be taken out in behalf of the State, of the notes and references, and other matter furnished by the reporter, connected with said decisions; and that instrument was declared to be an assignment and transfer of the copyright of the matter so published, which should consist of volumes of not less than five hundred pages each.

On the 27th of December, 1847, George F. Comstock was appointed State reporter for three years, and until his successor was appointed and qualified, at a salary of \$2,000 per annum. He was to have, under the law, no interest in the reports, but the copyright of his notes, references, and abstracts of arguments, was to be taken in the name of the secretary of state, for the benefit of the people of New York. The law forbade the reporter and all other persons from acquiring a copyright in the reports, but declared they might be republished by any person.

Mr. Comstock's term of office expired on the 27th of [ \* 170 ] \* December, 1850, and his successor, Henry R. Selden,

Esq., was appointed to succeed him on the 17th of January, 1851. Mr. Comstock questioned the validity of his appointment, and the matter was referred to the judges of the court of appeals, then in session at Albany, who decided that Mr. Selden was duly appointed. He took the oath on the 21st of January, 1851, and immediately entered upon the duties of his office.

Mr. Comstock published three volumes of his reports; and having in his hands, at the expiration of his office, opinions of the court to make half or more of another volume, on the suggestion of the judges, and with the consent of Mr. Selden, the opinions of the January term were delivered to him, that he might complete his fourth volume. At the time of this arrangement, he had made no preparation, by notes, &c., for this volume, and did not commence the work until some months afterwards.

After he had made considerable advance in the preparation of this volume, he invited proposals for the purchase of the copyright; and although the plaintiffs, in conversation with him, said they would give as much as any other persons; yet they made no proposal, as they were apprehensive it might affect the contract for the publication of the reports, as above stated. The defendants purchased the copyright, for which they paid \$2,500. At a large expense, they prepared stereotypes for the work, and printed it.

The plaintiffs, so soon as the volume was published, commenced a republication of it, and filed this bill to enjoin the defendants from selling their edition. Previous to the publication of the third volume of Comstock's Reports, the secretary of state had the copyright of the head-notes, references, &c., entered by the clerk of the district court of the United States, for the benefit of the State; and the complainants had a similar entry made, to secure the copyright to the State, of the fourth volume. This was not done by the secretary of state, as the law directed, and it seems it was not sanctioned by him, as he was doubtful whether he had the power to do so.

The 9th section of the copyright act of the 3d of February, 1831, provides "that any one who shall print or publish any manuscript whatever without the consent of the author or legal proprietor first obtained as aforesaid," "shall be liable to suffer and pay to the author or proprietor all damages occasioned by such injury," &c.

At common law, an author has a right to his unpublished manuscripts the same as to any other property he may possess, and this statute gives him a remedy by injunction to protect this right.

\* A formal transfer of a copyright by the supplementary [ \* 171 ] act of the 30th of June, 1834, is required to be proved and recorded as deeds for the conveyance of land, and such record operates as notice.

After the expiration of his official term, Comstock did not and could not act as reporter. His successor, having been appointed and qualified, discharged the duties of the office and received the salary. As many of the opinions of the court were in the hands of Comstock when his office expired, it might have been made a question whether he could not publish the fourth volume as reporter. This would have given to the State a continuous report of the decisions of the court of appeals, as the law contemplated, with the copyright of the notes, &c., secured for the benefit of the people of the State. If the opinions of the court came into his hands during his continuance in office, there would seem to be no impropriety in his publishing them, as filling up the measure of his term.

But it seems a different view was taken by the late reporter. As his term of office had expired, he was unwilling to publish the fourth volume without compensation for his labor. This changed his relations with the plaintiffs, as that contract was made as reporter, and on the supposition that he would be continued in that office. Under that contract, the complainants had the advantage of publishing the reports for the price stipulated, but any one was at liberty to republish them.

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The fourth volume was published by Mr. Comstock as an individual, he having secured to himself the copyright. This probably insured to the purchaser of the right the republication of the work for the term of twenty-eight years. Under the agreements made with the plaintiffs, they had only the profit of their contract.

Whether the plaintiffs may not have a remedy on their contract with Mr. Comstock in the local tribunals of the State, is not a question before us. Our only inquiry is, whether any relief can be given by this court under the copyright act. Where a case arises under that act, we have jurisdiction, though both the parties, as in this case, are citizens of the same State. But if the act do not give the remedy sought, we can only take jurisdiction on the ground that the controversy is between citizens of different States.

Were the plaintiffs the legal proprietors of the manuscript from which the fourth volume of Comstock's Reports was published? The plaintiffs rely upon their contract with the comptroller, the secretary of state, and Mr. Comstock, the reporter. In that contract it is said, "this instrument is declared to be an [ \* 172 ] \* assignment and transfer of the copyright of the matter so published to the parties of the second part."

This contract was made with Mr. Comstock as reporter, and the plaintiffs agreed to publish the work in volumes containing five hundred pages each, to have them well bound in calf, the types, paper, and the entire execution, to be equal to Denio's Reports; the work to be done under the superintendence of the reporter; copies to be furnished to certain officers of the State, and the publishers were to keep the volumes for sale at two dollars and fifty cents per copy; and in all things they were bound to comply with the statutes of the State.

Comstock could not have published the work as reporter without the consent of the court of appeals, and also the secretary of state, who was required to secure the copyright to the State; and for his labor in preparing the notes, references, &c., and superintending the printing, he could have received no compensation.

Without saying what effect might have been given to the contract had the relation of the parties remained unchanged, we are unable to say, as the case now stands before us, that the plaintiffs were the legal owners of the manuscript within the copyright law. The contract was made by Comstock as reporter, whose duties were regulated by law; and the obligations of the complainants as publishers were embodied in the contract, and were incompatible with any publication on private account.

The entire labor of the work was performed by Comstock, not as

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reporter, but on his own account. It is, we think, not a case for a specific execution of the contract; and, in effect, that is the object of the bill. This result has not been brought about by the acts of Comstock. He may have been imprudent in extending his contract unconditionally beyond the term of his office. But in doing so he has an apology, if not an excuse, by being associated in making the contract with two high functionaries of the State. Under the changed relation of the parties, the plaintiffs cannot be considered as the legal owners of the manuscript for the purposes of the contract under the copyright law.

Whatever obligation may arise from the contract under the circumstances as against Comstock must be founded on his failure to furnish the manuscripts to the plaintiffs, and of such a case we can take no jurisdiction as between the parties on the record.

The decree of the circuit court is affirmed.

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**JAMES M. COOPER, Plaintiff in Error, v. ENOCH C. ROBERTS.**

18 H. 173.

**SCHOOL LANDS—SIXTEENTH SECTION—RESERVATION ON ACCOUNT OF MINERALS.**

1. The act of Congress authorizing Michigan to organize as a State, like all other similar acts, granted the sixteenth section of every township to the State for school purposes.
2. When the State accepted this act, the grant became a contract or compact between the State and the United States.
3. As the government extended its surveys, so that the location of these sections was ascertained, the title in the State became complete.
4. Neither a lease made by the United States for mining purposes, nor the acts of congress of March 1, 1847, and September 1, 1850, were intended to or did impair the title of the State to these sections, nor was the consent of congress necessary to a valid sale by the State.
5. A trespasser upon one of these sections claiming a title adverse to that of the State under the compact aforesaid, has no right to inquire into mere irregularities in the mode by which the State sells the land under her own statutes. He has no interest in that question.

**WRIT of error to the circuit court for the district of Michigan.**  
**The case is well stated in the opinion.**

*Mr. Buel and Mr. Vinton*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Truman Smith*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 175 ]  
 The plaintiff sued in ejectment, to recover a portion of



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section No. 16, in township No. 50 north, of range 39 west, lying within the mineral district south of Lake Superior, in Michigan.

His case affirms that this section had been appropriated [ \* 176 ] by the \* United States to the State of Michigan for the use of schools, in their compact, by which that State became a member of the Union ; that the governor of Michigan issued, in November, 1851, to Alfred Williams, a patent, evincing a sale of that section under the laws of Michigan, in February, 1851 ; that he has a conveyance from the patentee, and that the defendant is a tenant in possession, withholding the *locus in quo* from him. The defendant, to support his issue, relies upon a license given in 1844, by the mineral agent of the United States for that district, empowering the donee to examine and dig for lead, and other ores, for the term of one year, and within that term to mark out and define a specific tract of land, not to exceed three miles square, for mining purposes ; and, if he should fulfill this and other conditions, he was to become entitled to a lease for three years, with a privilege of one or two renewals, under restrictions. The secretary of war, in September, 1845, executed a lease for a tract three miles square, which the donee of the license had selected, and which included the *locus in quo*, and stipulated to renew it, if congress shall not have passed a law "directing the sale, or other disposition of these lands," and if the lessee shall have complied with all the conditions of the present lease, and tendered a bond for the fulfillment of the conditions of the new lease, as described in the act. This lease came to the Minnesota Mining Company by assignment, and that company in 1847, and from thence till 1851, held possession of the land described in the declaration, erected valuable improvements, and made successful explorations for copper upon it. In November, 1850, the company applied to the proper officers of the land office to enter the land comprised in the lease, and from thence, till the date of their patent in 1852, the right of the company to secure the *locus in quo* by entry was in dispute in the land office of the United States. In September, 1851, the secretary of the interior determined adversely to the claim of the company, and in favor of the claim of Michigan ; and in 1852, upon proofs that the company had complied with the lease, while he reaffirmed his conclusions in favor of Michigan, allowed the entry of the company, but with a reservation of the rights of Michigan. The section No. 16, aforesaid, was surveyed in the summer of 1847, and the portion in controversy, in the report of the geological survey of the district, was returned to the land office as containing mines of copper. There was no application to the department of public lands to



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renew the lease held by the company, for the reason (it is said) that the system of letting mineral lands of this kind had been abandoned, upon the doubts expressed by the attorney general, in 1846, of the legality of such leases. Upon the trial of the cause in the circuit court, the \*plaintiff moved the court [ \* 177 ] for instructions to the jury, that, upon the facts, he was entitled to a verdict, and that the defendant's patent was invalid. The court refused the prayer, and told the jury, "that by the act of congress of 1st March, 1847, all the mining lands within the district, reported, were taken out of the operation of the general law for the disposal of the public lands, in pursuance of an established policy to reserve from the ordinary mode of disposing of public lands those that contained valuable salt springs, lead mines, &c., that they might be leased or disposed of to purchasers having full knowledge of their value, by reason of the salt springs or mineral ores they contained, at their full value, for the public benefit. That, by the above act, all the mineral lands reported by the geologist within the district, in pursuance of this settled policy of the government, were appropriated and disposed of without reference to the school reservation, the appropriation of the land being made before the surveys were executed, and before the locality of section 16 could be known. And as it appears from the report of the geologist that the land in controversy contains valuable minerals, and was within the boundaries of the lease under which the Minnesota Company claim, and that they had made large expenditures thereon for mining, were entitled to the right of purchase, as provided in the third section of the above law; and having paid for the same, it was a disposition of the land which congress had a right to make, and was an exercise of power within the grant. That the setting apart of another section adjacent will satisfy the grant to the State."

Our first inquiry will be into the nature of the right of the State of Michigan to section No. 16 in the townships of that State, and the effect of the discovery of minerals in such a section upon that right. The practice of setting apart section No. 16 of every township of public lands, for the maintenance of public schools, is traceable to the ordinance of 1785, being the first enactment for the disposal by sale of the public lands in the western territory. The appropriation of public lands for that object became a fundamental principle, by the ordinance of 1787, which settled terms of compact between the people and States of the northwestern territory, and the original States, unalterable, except by consent. One of the articles affirmed that "religion, morality, and knowledge, being

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necessary for good government and the happiness of mankind ;'' and ordained that "schools, and the means of education, should be forever encouraged." This principle was extended, first, by congressional enactment, (1 Stats. at Large, 550, § 6,) and afterwards, in 1802, by compact between the United States and Georgia to the southwestern territory. The earliest development of this [ \* 178 ] \* article, in practical legislation, is to be found in the organization of the State of Ohio, and the adjustment of its civil polity, according to the ordinance, preparatory to its admission to the Union. Proposals were made to the inhabitants of the incipient State to become a sovereign community, and to accept certain articles as the conditions of union, which, being accepted, were to become obligatory upon the United States. The first of these articles is, "that the section No. 16 in every township, and where such section has been sold, granted, or disposed of, other lands equivalent thereto and most contiguous to the same, shall be granted to the inhabitants of such township, for the use of schools."

A portion of this territory had been encumbered in the articles of cession by the States, and another portion by congress for the fulfillment of public obligations, prior to the ordinance of 1785, and without reference to the school reservations ; therefore, uniformity in the appropriation of the section No. 16 was partially defeated. The southwestern territory was similarly burdened in the compact of cession by Georgia, with the fulfillment of antecedent obligations, and similar paramount obligations have arisen in treaties with the Indian tribes who inhabited it. The rights of private property vested in the inhabitants, ceded with Louisiana and Florida, and guaranteed to them in the treaties of cession, created an obstruction to the same policy within them. But the constancy with which the United States have adhered to the policy in the various compacts with the people of the newly-formed States, and the care which congress has manifested to prevent the accumulation of prior obligations which might interrupt it, fully display their estimate of its value and importance. There is, obviously, a definite purpose declared to consecrate the same central section of every township of every State which might be added to the federal system, to the promotion "of good government and the happiness of mankind," by the spread of "religion, morality, and knowledge," and thus, by a uniformity of local association, to plant in the heart of every community the same sentiments of grateful reverence for the wisdom, forecast, and magnanimous statesmanship of those who framed the institutions for these new States, before the constitution

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for the old had yet been modeled. Has the discovery of minerals of value upon this section been deemed a sufficient cause for its withdrawal from the operation of this policy, and the compacts which develop it?

The ordinance of 1785 dedicated the section No. 16 for the maintenance of public schools, and in each sale of the public lands there was by the same ordinance a reservation of one-third part of all gold, silver, lead, and copper mines within the township or lot sold. No reservations were afterwards made [ \* 179 ] of gold, silver, or copper mines until the acts of March, 1847. By the act of March 26, 1804, and the act of March, 1807, every "grant of a salt spring or a lead mine thereafter to be made, which had been discovered previously to the purchase from the United States, was to be considered as null and void." (2 Stats. at Large, 279, § 6 ; 449, § 6.) These statutes indicate a policy to withdraw from sale lands containing these minerals. But the compacts have been made without such a reservation, nor has the usage of the land office interpolated such an exception to the general grant of the section No. 16 for the use of schools.

The grant of the section No. 16 for the use of schools can be executed without violating the spirit of the legislation upon salt springs or lead mines, and, as we have seen, no statute prior to the admission of Michigan to the Union contains an appropriation or reservation of other mineral lands. The State of Michigan was admitted to the Union, with the unalterable condition "that every section No. 16, in every township of the public lands, and where such section has been sold or otherwise disposed of, other lands equivalent thereto, and as contiguous as may be, shall be granted to the State for the use of schools." We agree, that until the survey of the township and the designation of the specific section, the right of the State rests in compact—binding, it is true, the public faith, and dependent for execution upon the political authorities. Courts of justice have no authority to mark out and define the land which shall be subject to the grant. But when the political authorities have performed this duty, the compact has an object, upon which it can attach, and if there is no legal impediment the title of the State becomes a legal title. The *jus ad rem* by the performance of that executive act becomes a *jus in re*, judicial in its nature, and under the cognizance and protection of the judicial authorities, as well as the others. *Gaines v. Nicholson*, 9 How. 356.

The question now arises whether the act of March 1, 1847, created a legal impediment to the operation of this principle, either

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by the reservation of the land for public uses, or by its appropriation to superior claims. In March, 1847, congress established a land district in this region for the disposal of the public lands. It directed a geological survey for the ascertainment of those containing valuable ores, whether of lead or copper, and a report to the land office. It provided for the advertisement and sale of such lands, departing in a measure from that usual mode, as to the length of the notice and the amount of price; and in reference to the remainder of the lands, it applied the usual regulations. To

the section containing these directions, (9 Stats. at Large, [ \* 180 ] 146, § 2,) there is added an \*exception from such sales, section No. 16, "for the use of schools, and such reservations as the president shall deem necessary for public uses." It has been argued, that this exception is only applicable to the lands not contained in the geological report, and that the mineral lands "were appropriated and disposed of without reference to the school reservation by this section of the act." But it does no violence to the language to embrace within the exception all the sales, for which the section provides, and we cannot suppose that congress could be tempted, with the hope of a small additional price, which is imposed upon the purchasers of the mineral lands, to raise a question upon its compact with Michigan, or to disturb its ancient and honored policy. We think the interpretation which claims this as an exception in favor of Michigan, is to be preferred to that which excludes her from the mineral lands under this compact. And this conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the power of the president to make useful public reservations is connected in the exception with the school reservations. There could be no reason for limiting the power of the president to a single class of the public lands, and to exclude him from another in the same district. We conclude that this act does not withdraw the mineral lands from the compact with Michigan.

Did the execution of the lease by the secretary of war, in 1845, before the survey of the lands, dispose of these lands so as to defeat the claim of the State? The Minnesota Mining Company, at the date of the act of March 1, 1847, held the unexpired lease by assignment, and continued to perform its conditions until their patent was issued. The 3d section of that act authorized the persons in possession under such a lease, who had fulfilled its conditions, to enter in one tract all the lands included in it, at a diminished price, "during the continuance of the lease." The 4th section directed the sale of the mineral lands contained in the report, but with a proviso, that none of the lands contained in any outstand-

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ing lease, whose conditions had been fulfilled, should be sold till the expiration of the lease, either "by efflux of time, voluntary surrender, or other legal extinguishment." The act of congress of September, 1850, (9 Stats. at Large, 472,) abrogated such of the clauses of the act of 1847, which distinguished the mineral from other public lands, and placed them alike, under the ordinary system for the disposal of the public domain, but reserved to lessees and occupants the privileges conferred by the act of 1847. From that time, therefore, the argument "that the mining lands within the district were taken out of the general law for the disposal of the public lands, by the act of March, 1847," lost all its cogency, and the rights of the Minnesota Company depended entirely

\*upon the validity of the lease and the protection ac- [\* 181] corded to the lessee. The lease expired by "efflux of time," in September, 1848. There was no renewal of the lease, for the double reason that its original validity was doubted by the highest executive authority, and those doubts were submitted to by the lessee, and because congress had passed the law for the disposal of the mineral lands, which determined the covenant for renewal, by the terms of the lease itself.

Hence, had there been a legal impediment to the execution of the compact with Michigan, erected either by the second section of the act of 1847, which separated for some purposes the mineral from other public lands, or by the privileges granted to lessees or their assigns, in the 3d section of that act, it was removed by the repealing clause of the act of 1850, and the non-compliance with the conditions on which the privileges depended. The section No. 16 was, at that date, disencumbered, and subject to the operation of the compact, whatever might have been its pre-existing state.

That compact had not been fulfilled by an assignment to the State "of equivalent lands, contiguous as may be," under the act of May 20, 1826. (4 Stats. at Large, 179.) Shortly after the passage of the act of 1850, we find Michigan asserting her claim to this section, advertising it for sale, and selling it to the vendor of the plaintiff. We also find the officers of the land office of the United States denying the right of the Minnesota Mining Company to enter the land, and admitting the superior title of the State of Michigan, and finally reserving those rights in the patent issued to the company. We entirely concur with these officers in their decision on the subject of contest, for the reasons we have given. We think that the jury should have been instructed, that the section No. 16 was vested in the State of Michigan at the date of the

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entry by the Minnesota Mining Company, and that the company did not acquire title by its patent.

The defendant insists that the title of the plaintiff is invalid, for the reason that the State of Michigan was not empowered by congress to sell the school reservations. Where such grants have been made to the State, or to the inhabitants of the township for the use of schools, it has been usual for congress to authorize the sale of the lands, if the State should desire it. (4 Stats. at Large, 138, 237, 298; 5 Ib. 600.) But this consent was not, perhaps, necessary, and the application for it is but evidence of the strong desire of the State authorities to act in good faith, and to keep within the pale of the law. 4 Ala. R. 622.

The trusts created by these compacts relate to a subject [ \* 182 ] \* certainly of universal interest, but of municipal concern, over which the power of the State is plenary and exclusive. In the present instance, the grant is to the State directly, without limitation of its power, though there is a sacred obligation imposed on its public faith. We think it was competent to Michigan to sell the school reservations without the consent of congress.

The defendant further objects, that the officers of the State violated the statutes of Michigan in selling these lands, after they were known, or might have been known, to contain minerals. Without a nice inquiry into these statutes, to ascertain whether they reserve such lands from sale, or into the disputed fact whether they were known, or might have been known, to contain minerals, we are of the opinion that the defendant is not in a condition to raise the question on this issue. The officers of the State of Michigan, embracing the chief magistrate of the State, and who have the charge and superintendence of this property, certify this sale to have been made pursuant to law, and have clothed the purchaser with the most solemn evidence of title. The defendant does not claim in privity with Michigan, but holds an adverse right, and is a trespasser upon the land, to which her title is attached.

Michigan has not complained of the sale, and retains, so far as the case shows, the price paid for it. Under these circumstances, we must regard the patent as conclusive of the fact of a valid and regular sale on this issue.

Upon the whole record, we think the jury should have been instructed, that if they found the facts thus given in evidence to be true, the plaintiff was entitled to recover the premises in question.

Judgment reversed; cause remanded—a *venire* to issue.



Hickox v. Buckingham.

## THE SCHOONER FREEMAN.

HICKOX v. BUCKINGHAM *et al.*

18 H. 182.

ADMIRALTY—LIEN OF A CONTRACT OF AFFREIGHTMENT AS AGAINST GENERAL OWNER  
AND SPECIAL OWNER.

1. The vessel is bound to the shipper and to his consignee or assignee of the bill of lading for the performance of the contract of affreightment, and the bill of lading given for goods thus shipped binds the general owner of the vessel as well as the special owner.
2. This rule is founded upon the principle that, when the general owner parts with the control of his vessel to a charterer or other special owner, he expects it to be used for carrying cargo, and knows that the master must have a right to make such contracts on that subject as will bind the vessel.
3. But if no cargo is received, there is nothing for which a lien exists, though the master may have given a false bill of lading.
4. And neither the general owner of the vessel nor his interest in it is bound by fraudulent and false bills of lading, where no goods were received, though the master signed the bills under instructions from the special owner, to enable him to negotiate them by fraud.
5. Nor can the innocent consignee and holder of such false bills, though he have in good faith advanced money on them, hold the vessel liable, at the expense of the general owner in such case.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the northern district of New York.

*Mr. Haven*, for appellant.

*Mr. Ganson*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 187 ]

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the northern district of New York.

The appellees filed their libel in the district court, alleging that they are the consignees named in two bills of lading, signed by the master of the schooner Freeman, which certify that certain quantities of flour had been shipped on board the schooner by S. Holmes and Company, at Cleveland, in the State of Ohio, to be carried to Buffalo, in the State of New York, and there safely delivered—dangers of navigation excepted—to an agent named in the bills of lading, to be by him forwarded to the libellants, in the city of New York. That though this merchandise was thus consigned to the libellants for account of the shipper, yet, on receipt of the bills of lading, and on the faith thereof, the libellants made advances to the shippers. That thirteen hundred and sixty barrels of the flour mentioned in the bills of lading were not delivered at

18h 182
L-ed 341
38f 513

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Buffalo, though the delivery was not prevented by any danger of navigation.

In accordance with the prayer of the libel, the schooner was arrested, and the appellant intervened as claimant.

It appeared that, a short time before these bills of lading [ \* 188 ] were \* signed, the claimant, being the sole owner of the schooner, contracted with John Holmes to sell it to him for the sum of \$4,000, payable by installments of \$500, at different dates; that, by the contract, John Holmes was to take possession of the vessel, and if he should make all the agreed payments, the claimant was to convey to him; that only one installment had become payable, and had been paid, when the vessel was arrested; that the vessel was delivered to John Holmes, under this contract, and he allowed his son, Sylvanus Holmes, to have the entire control and management of the schooner, which was in his employment, and victualed and manned by him, and commanded by a master whom he appointed, at the time the bills of lading in question were signed.

It further appeared that Sylvanus Holmes transacted business under the style of S. Holmes and Company; that the flour mentioned in these bills of lading as having been shipped by him, and which the master failed to deliver, never was in fact shipped—nor, so far as appeared, had Sylvanus Holmes any such flour; and that he induced the master to sign the bills of lading by fraud and imposition, intending to use them—as he did use them—as instruments to impose on the libellants, and obtain advances on the faith thereof.

To state succinctly the legal relations of these parties, it may be said that the claimant was the general owner of the vessel; that Sylvanus Holmes was owner *pro hac vice*; that the libellants are holders of the bills of lading, for a valuable consideration parted with, in good faith, on the credit of the bills of lading; but that the bills of lading themselves are not real contracts of affreightment, but only false pretences of such contracts; and the question is whether they can operate, under the maritime law, to create a lien, binding the interest of the claimant in the vessel.

Under the maritime law of the United States, the vessel is bound to the cargo, and the cargo to the vessel, for the performance of a contract of affreightment; but the law creates no lien on a vessel as a security for the performance of a contract to transport cargo, until some lawful contract of affreightment is made, and a cargo shipped under it.

In this case there was no cargo to which the ship could be bound,

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and there was no contract made, for the performance of which the ship could stand as security.

But the real question is whether, in favor of a *bona fide* holder of such bills of lading procured from the master by the fraud of an owner *pro hac vice*, the general owner is estopped to show the truth, as undoubtedly the special owner would be. This question does not appear to have been made in the court below,

\* the distinction between the special and general owner [ \* 189 ] not having been insisted on. So large a part of the carrying trade of this country is carried on in vessels of which the masters, or other persons, are owners *pro hac vice*, and the practice of taking security by way of mortgage of vessels has become so common, while, at the same time, the confidence placed in bills of lading as the representatives of property is so great and so important to commerce, that the relative rights of the holders of such documents, and of the general owners and mortgagees of vessels, which are involved in this case, are subjects of magnitude; and the case has received the attentive consideration of the court.

The first and most obvious view which presents itself is, that the claimant in this case is not personally liable on these bills of lading. The master who signed them was not his agent, and they created no contract between him and the consignor or consignee, or any third person who might become their holder. Abbott on Shipping, 42 and note, 57 and note. And it has been laid down by the high court of admiralty in England, (*The Druid*, 1 Wm. Rob. 399,) that "in all causes of action which may arise during the ownership of the persons whose ship is proceeded against, I apprehend that no suit could ever be maintained against a ship, where the owners were not themselves personally liable, or where their personal liability had not been given up, as in bottomry bonds by taking a lien on the vessel. The liability of the ship, and the responsibility of the owners in such cases, are convertible terms; the ship is not liable if the owners are not responsible; and, *vice versa*, no responsibility can attach on the owners if the ship is exempt and not liable to be proceeded against." See also *The Bold Buccleugh*, 2 Eng. Law and Eq. 537.

Though this language is broad enough to cover all cases, whether of contract or tort, it should be observed that the case before the court was one of willful tort by the master, and that there was no occasion to advert to any distinction between a general and special owner, or to consider whether the interest of the former in the vessel could be bound by the act of the latter, or of the master appointed by him.

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We are of opinion that, under our admiralty law, contracts of affreightment, entered into with the master, in good faith, and within the scope of his apparent authority as master, bind the vessel to the merchandise for the performance of such contracts, wholly irrespective of the ownership of the vessel, and whether the master be the agent of the general or the special owner.

In the case of the *Phebe*, Ware's R. 263, Judge Ware has traced the power of the master to bind the vessel by contracts of affreightment to the maritime usages of the middle ages. [ \* 190 ] So \* far as respects such contracts made by the master in the usual course of the employment of the vessel, and entered into with a party who has no notice of any restriction upon that apparent authority, those maritime usages may safely be considered to make part of our law; though we should hesitate to declare that their effect has not been modified by our own commercial law, which has recognized interests and rights unknown to the commercial world when those usages obtained. And we desire to be understood as not intending to say that all contracts made by a master within the usual scope of his employment, which, by the ancient maritime law, would have created liens on the vessel, will now do so, in such manner as to bind the interests in the vessel of parties whom he does not represent as agent. For the ground on which we rest the authority of a master, who is either special owner or agent of the special owner, is, that when the general owner intrusts the special owner with the entire control and employment of the ship, it is a just and reasonable implication of law that the general owner assents to the creation of liens binding upon his interest in the vessel, as security for the performance of contracts of affreightment made in the course of the lawful employment of the vessel. The general owner must be taken to know that the purpose for which the vessel is hired, when not employed to carry cargo belonging to the hirer, is to carry cargo of third persons; and that bills of lading, or charter-parties, must, in the invariable regular course of that business, be made, for the performance of which the law confers a lien on the vessel.

He should be considered as contemplating and consenting that what is uniformly done may be done effectually; and he should not be allowed to say that he did not expect, or agree, that third persons, who have shipped merchandise and taken bills of lading therefor, would thereby acquire a lien on the vessel which he has placed under the control of another, for the very purpose of enabling him to make such contracts to which the law attaches the

lien. See *The Cassius*, 2 Story, 93; *Webb v. Pierce*, 1 Curtis, 107.

But if this be the ground upon which the interest of the general owner is subjected to liens, by the act of those who are not so his agents as to bind him personally, this ground wholly fails in the case at bar.

There can be no implication that the general owner consented that false pretences of contracts, having the semblance of bills of lading, should be created as instruments of fraud; or that, if so created, they should in any manner affect him or his property. They do not grow out of any employment of the vessel; and there is as little privity or connection between him, or his vessel, \* and such simulated bills of lading, as there would [ \* 191 ] be between him and any other fraud or forgery which the master or special owner might commit.

Nor can the general owner be estopped from showing the real character of the transaction, by the fact that the libellants advanced money on the faith of the bills of lading; because this change in the libellants' condition was not induced by the act of the claimant, or of any one acting within the scope of an authority which the claimant had conferred. Even if the master had been appointed by the claimant, a willful fraud committed by him on a third person, by signing false bills of lading, would not be within his agency. If the signer of a bill of lading was not the master of the vessel, no one would suppose the vessel bound; and the reason is, because the bill is signed by one not in privity with the owner. But the same reason applies to a signature made by a master out of the course of his employment. The taker assumes the risk, not only of the genuineness of the signature, and of the fact that the signer was master of the vessel, but also of the apparent authority of the master to issue the bill of lading. We say the apparent authority, because any secret instructions by the owner, inconsistent with the authority with which the master appears to be clothed, would not affect third persons. But the master of a vessel has no more an apparent unlimited authority to sign bills of lading, than he has to sign bills of sale of the ship. He has an apparent authority, if the ship be a general one, to sign bills of lading for cargo actually shipped; and he has also authority to sign a bill of sale of the ship, when, in case of disaster, his power of sale arises. But the authority, in each case, arises out of, and depends upon, a particular state of facts. It is not an unlimited authority in the one case more than in the other; and his act, in either case, does not bind the owner, even in favor of an innocent purchaser, if the facts upon which his power

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depended did not exist; and it is incumbent upon those who are about to change their condition, upon the faith of his authority, to ascertain the existence of all the facts upon which his authority depends.

Though the law on this point seems to have been considered in Westminster Hall not to have been settled, when the eighth edition of Abbott on Shipping was published, in 1849, (Ab. on Sh. 325,) we take it to be now settled, by the cases of *Grant v. Norway*, 2 Eng. Law and Eq. 337; *Hubbersty v. Ward*, 18 *ibid.* 551; and *Coleman v. Riches*, 29 *ibid.* 323.

The same law was much earlier laid down in *Walter v. Brewer*, 11 Mass. 99.

But the case at bar is much stronger in favor of the claimant, because the master was not appointed by him, and the [\* 192] signature \* of the bills of lading was obtained by the fraud of the special owner.

In *Gracie v. Palmer*, 8 Wheat. 605, the question came before this court, whether the charterer and the master could, by a contract made with a shipper who acted in good faith, destroy the lien of the owner on the goods shipped, for the freight due under the charter-party. It was held they could not; and the decision is placed upon the ground of want of authority to do the act. It was admitted by the court that the charterer and master might impose on a shipper in a foreign port, by making him believe the charterer was owner, and the master his agent. But it was considered that so far as respected the owner, the risk of loss from such imposition lay on the shipper. So, in this case, even if the special owner and the master had combined to issue these simulated bills of lading, they could not create a lien on the interest of the general owner of the vessel. Upon the actual posture of the facts, the master having been defrauded by the special owner into signing the bills of lading, it would be difficult to distinguish them, so far as respects the rights of the claimant, from bills forged by the special owner. On these grounds, we are of opinion that, upon the facts as they appear from the evidence in the record, the maritime law gives no lien on the schooner; that the claimant is not estopped from alleging and proving those facts; and, consequently, that the decree of the court below must be reversed, and the cause remanded, with directions to dismiss the libel, with costs.

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Heirs of Poydras de la Lande v. Treasurer of Louisiana.

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HEIRS OF POYDRAS DE LA LANDE, Plaintiffs in Error, v. THE TREASURER OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA.

18 H. 192.

JURISDICTION ON A WRIT TO THE STATE COURT.

1. The supreme court of Louisiana held the plaintiffs in error liable to a tax on succession, on the ground that they were citizens of France. They asserted themselves to be citizens of Louisiana. None of the questions mentioned in the 25th section of the judiciary act were raised by the record or decided by the court below, and this court has no jurisdiction.
2. A petition for rehearing in the State court cannot raise such question, unless it appear in the record of the case or necessarily arises out of it.

THIS is a writ of error to the supreme court of Louisiana, and the case is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Janin*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 194 ]

This is a writ of error to the supreme court of Louisiana.

The treasurer of the State of Louisiana instituted a suit in the second district of New Orleans, claiming, in behalf of the State, a tax of ten per cent. on the amount of the succession of Benjamin Poydras de la Lande, inherited by persons alleged to be citizens and residents of France.

This tax was claimed by virtue of two acts of the legislature of Louisiana, one passed on the 26th of March, 1842, which provided "that each and every person, not being domiciliated in this State, and not being a citizen of any State or Territory of the Union, who shall be entitled—whether as heir, legatee, or donee—to the whole or any part of the succession deceased, whether such person shall have died in this State or elsewhere, shall pay a tax of ten per cent. on all sums, or on the value of all property which he may actually receive, or so much thereof as is situated in this State."

The 76th section of the act of March 21, 1850, provides, that "every executor, curator, tutor or administrator, having the charge or administration of succession property belonging in whole or in part to a person residing out of this State, and not being a citizen of any other State or Territory of the United States, shall be bound to retain in his hands the amount of the tax imposed by law, and to pay over the same to the State treasurer."

Benjamin Poydras, an old and wealthy naturalized citizen of Louisiana, having died in 1851, in France, leaving a widow and



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three minor children in that country, the treasurer of the State of Louisiana filed, on the 27th of February, 1852, a petition in the second district court of New Orleans against the widow, as tutrix of her minor children, claiming ten per cent. on the amount of the property left by the deceased in Louisiana. The grounds for this claim, as alleged in the petition, are, "that the said tutrix, as well as her said minor children, are all citizens of France, and reside in that country."

[ \* 195 ] \* The answer of the defendants denied their liability for the payment of the tax, alleging that they were citizens of the State of Louisiana, legally domiciliated therein. The lower court gave judgment for the State, which judgment, on appeal, was affirmed by the supreme court of the State.

This being a writ of error, under the 25th section of the judiciary act of 1789, the defendant in error insists that there is no jurisdiction. That section provides, that on "a final judgment or decree in any suit in the highest court of law or equity in which a decision in the suit could be had, where is drawn in question the validity of a treaty or statute of, or an authority exercised under, any State, on the ground of their being repugnant to the constitution or laws of the United States, and the decision is in favor of such their validity, may be re-examined, and reversed or affirmed in the supreme court of the United States, upon a writ of error."

In the petition, the respondents are alleged to be citizens and residents of France. In their answer, they allege, that the deceased, in the year 1804, settled in Louisiana, and became a citizen of the United States, and maintained his residence and citizenship in Louisiana; that his last visit to France was intended to be temporary, but he was involved in lawsuits in that country for years, though he intended to return to Louisiana, and would have done so, had he not died. During his absence he acquired a large amount of property in Louisiana, and he continued to express his determination to return to that country during his life. And they alleged that they were citizens of the State of Louisiana.

In the final judgment in the lower court, the judge says:

"The deceased was a French subject, who was born and died in France; and his heirs, now residents and natives of France, who have never been in this State, claim his estate. It appears to me that they came within the purview of the act of 1842." A judgment for \$45,208.80 and costs of suit was entered against the defendants. An appeal was taken to the supreme court of the State, where the judgment of the inferior court was affirmed.

It does not appear from the pleadings, and procedure in the



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Heirs of Poydras de la Lande v. Treasurer of Louisiana.

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inferior or in the supreme court, that the question was made whether the acts of 1842 and 1850 were in conflict with any provision of the constitution of the United States.

The supreme court held, that the tax in question "attaches not only to property falling to alien heirs, who are non-residents, but also to the property falling to citizens of our own State residing abroad." And they say the object of the law is to discourage absenteeism. The court held that neither the act of \*1842 nor that of 1850 is repugnant to the 187th article [\*196] of the constitution of the State, of 1845.

Up to the final judgment in this case, in the supreme court of Louisiana, no question was raised by the counsel nor decided by the court, involving the constitutionality of either of the acts before us, under the constitution of the United States. Indeed, this is not asserted by the counsel; but it is contended that such a question was raised and decided on the petition for a rehearing. If this were admitted, does it bring the case within the 25th section? It must appear from the record, that one or both the acts referred to are not only repugnant to some provision of the constitution of the United States, but that the point was presented to the court, and it decided in favor of the unconstitutional act or acts.

The points, which the defendants requested the court to review, were:

1. That a citizen of Louisiana, whether native or naturalized, who absents himself, even for temporary purposes, from the State for more than two years, thereby loses his domicile and residence, and is bound to pay to the State ten per cent. on any inheritance, legacy, or donation to which he may be entitled as intestate or under a will, if the estate of which he is heir and legatee is opened in the State after his aforesaid absence of more than two years; but that he would not be liable to this tax, if during his absence he had become a citizen of another State or Territory of the Union.

2. That the act of March 26, 1842, which establishes the tax of ten per cent. upon foreign non-resident heirs, is not contrary to the 12th article of the constitution of 1845.

3. That Benjamin Poydras, by his prolonged residence in France, during the latter part of his life, had lost his domicile in Louisiana.

In neither of the above grounds is there an intimation of any conflict with the federal constitution in the decision. Whether there was a repugnancy between the tax acts and the State constitution, is a matter which belongs exclusively to the State court.

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Heirs of Lafayette v. Kenton.

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The court refused the rehearing, on what ground does not appear.

This court can exercise no appellate power over the supreme court of a State, except in a few specified cases; and the ground of jurisdiction must be stated with precision, and the ruling of the court to bring the case under the 25th section must appear, on the record, to have been against the right claimed. Any reason assigned for a rehearing or a new trial is not sufficient.

The case is dismissed for want of jurisdiction.

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HEIRS OF LAFAYETTE, Plaintiffs in Error, v. JOSEPH KENTON and others.

SAME v. CARTER and others.

18 H. 197.

PLAT IN A PATENT FOR LAND.

1. Patent issued to Lafayette and his heirs in 1825, on a location made by him in 1807, on vacant lands outside the line of six hundred yards abandoned by congress to the city of New Orleans, was held to be good for only such parts of the land surveyed and patented as were found to be vacant after congress had investigated and passed upon private claims prior in date to this entry.
2. That the patent containing on its face a plat on which the vacant parts were distinguished from that covered by valid claims, this plat was conclusive in a suit founded on the patent.

THE case comes here by writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Louisiana, and the facts are all stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Taylor*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Benjamin* and *Mr. Janin*, for defendants.

Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court.

By an act of 1803, congress authorized the secretary of war to issue to Major General Lafayette, land warrants, amounting in all, to 11,520 acres. By the act of March 2, 1805, he was authorized to locate his warrants on any lands, "the property of the United States," within the Orleans territory; the locations to be made with the register of a land office established there, and the surveys were to be executed under the authority of the surveyor of the public lands south of Tennessee. Patents were directed to be issued, when surveys of the respective tracts were presented to the secretary of the treasury, "together with a certificate of the proper register, (in each case,) stating that the land surveyed was not

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rightfully claimed by any other person." And the act further provided, that no location should include any improved lands or lots.

By an act passed in 1806, entries were authorized for any quantity of land not less than five hundred acres.

\* On the 26th day of November, 1807, General Lafay- [\* 198] ette (by his agent) located 503 acres, calling for "vacant land situated beyond the line of six hundred yards lately abandoned by congress to the corporation of the said city, round the fortifications of the same."

Owing to the unsettled state of private land claims near the city of New Orleans, the location was not surveyed until March, 1825, when the principal surveyor certified to the register that he had surveyed for General Lafayette, "a tract of land situate in the parish of Orleans, beyond the line of six hundred yards abandoned by congress to the corporation of the city of New Orleans, having such courses, distances, boundaries, and contents, as are represented in the annexed plat of survey."

Pursuant to the act of March 2, 1805, the register certified that "the lands contained in the survey returned to his office were vacant, with the exception of the parts designated as private claims."

On the 4th day of July, 1825, a patent issued, which, by its recitals, describes the out-boundaries of the 503 acres, and then the granting clause declares that there is "granted to said General Lafayette, and to his heirs, all such PARTS or PARCELS of the tract of land above described as are 'not legally claimed' by any other person or persons whomsoever."

From the recitals in the patent, it might be inferred that General Lafayette's entry had the same boundaries as described in the patent; the fact, however, is, that the description contained in the patent is the first description, in words, of the land claimed under the entry; the patent being, in fact, founded on the figurative plan, which is attached to and forms an essential part of the patent, and to this plan we are forced to look for a certificate of the register, "stating that the land is not rightfully claimed by any other person."

Until the certificate was made, the secretary was not authorized to issue the patent, and, to enable the register to make the proper certificate, he was compelled to delay till congress, either directly or indirectly, through commissioners, ascertained the rightful claims of others lying within the limits supposed to be covered by General Lafayette's location; and as the location, in the form it was surveyed, (and no doubt as claimed to exist when it was made,)

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notoriously interfered with claims of different private individuals, and covered possessions protected by the act of March 3, 1807, no reason could be urged, on behalf of the locator, why a survey and certificate should be made and returned to the secretary of the treasury before the private claims were duly ascertained; it being the obvious object of the locator to obtain "the parts or [ \* 199 ] parcels of land," within his \* out-boundaries, that should chance be found vacant, after the private claims had been acted on and confirmed, or rejected.

As respected these private rights and pretensions, congress reserved to itself the power to deal with them by such means as were deemed appropriate; and by the course of action it prescribed, General Lafayette was compelled to abide. The case of *West v. Cochran* (17 How. 403) lays down the governing rule on the subject.

The courts of justice have no power to revise what congress, or commissioners acting by its authority, have done in their confirmations of the titles here assailed. Against the United States these confirmations are conclusive, and they are equally so against General Lafayette; this being a condition imposed on his location by the act of 1805, above quoted, and which is affirmed in his patent. Titles, covering the lands sought to be recovered by the petitioners below, were confirmed to others before the patent to General Lafayette was issued, which appears by documents found in the record. But, if these documents were wanting, we are of opinion that the patent, and the figurative plan, with the designations on it, where the private confirmed titles and the vacant lands are laid down on the plot, and noted as private property or as vacant, furnish evidence that nothing passed by the grant but the lands noted as being vacant. It is, therefore, ordered that the judgment in the circuit court be affirmed in the respective cases cited in the caption.

JOHN B. CRAIGHEAD *et al.*, Appellants, *v.* JOSEPH E. and ALEXANDER WILSON.

18 H. 199.

WHAT IS A FINAL DECREE.

1. This court will refuse to hear an appeal where the decree is not final, though neither party raises the objection.
2. A decree is not final so as to authorize an appeal which, while it settles the right of plaintiffs to recover, refers to a master the adjustment of complicated accounts, from which the amount due from plaintiffs to defendant is to be ascertained.

18h	199
L-ed	332
132	93
132	95

APPEAL from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana.

*Mr. Robertson and Mr. Taylor*, for appellants.

*Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Janin*, for appellees.

Neither of whom raised the question of jurisdiction discussed by the court.

\* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 200 ]

This is an appeal from the circuit court of the United States, for the eastern district of Louisiana.

During the opening argument of this case, doubts were suggested whether the decree of the circuit court was final within the act of congress, and the attention of the court was directed to that question.

The complainants filed their bill in the circuit court, claiming as heirs a part of the property of Joseph and Lavinia Erwin, deceased. Erwin died in 1829, in the parish of Iberville, having made his will in 1828. His property, real and personal, was much embarrassed; the persons claiming an interest in the succession were numerous; and, from the loose manner in which the property was managed by the testator in his lifetime, and by those who succeeded him, great difficulty was found in the distribution of the estate.

The circuit court, having ascertained the heirship of the claimants and their relative rights in the succession, referred the matter to a special master, "to take an account of the successions of the said Joseph Erwin, sen., Joseph Erwin, jr., and Lavinia Erwin, in so far as it may be necessary to state the accounts between the plaintiffs and the heirs at law, defendants in this suit, to ascertain the property in kind that remains in the possession and control of either of the defendants, except Adams and Whiteall, as aforesaid—what has been sold, and the prices of the same and the profits thereof; and he will report all the encumbrances that have been discharged by either of the defendants on the same, and make to them all just allowances for payments, and permanent and useful improvements, and just expenses, and to ascertain what may be due to the said plaintiffs from either defendant; and the said master may make a special report of any matters that may be requisite to a full adjustment of the questions in the cause."

By the 22d section of the judiciary act of 1789, it is provided, that final decrees of the circuit court, where the amount in con-

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trover exceeds two thousand dollars, may be brought before this court by an appeal. The law intended that one appeal should settle the matter in controversy between the parties; and this would be the result in all cases where the appeal is taken on a final decree, unless it should be reversed or modified by this court.

The cases are numerous which have been dismissed on the ground that the appeals were taken from interlocutory decrees. In *Perkins v. Fourniquet*, 6 How. 206, it was held, "where the circuit court decreed that the complainants were entitled to two sevenths of certain property, and referred the matter to a [ \* 201 ] master in chancery, to take and report an account of it, and then reserved all other matters in controversy between the parties until the coming in of the master's report," was not a final decree on which an appeal could be taken. And, in the same volume, 209, *Pulliam et al. v. Christian*, where "a decree of the circuit court, setting aside a deed made by a bankrupt before his bankruptcy; directing the trustees under the deed to deliver over to the assignee in bankruptcy all the property remaining undisposed of in their hands, but without deciding how far the trustees might be liable to the assignee for the proceeds of sales previously made and paid away to the creditors; directing an account to be taken of these last-mentioned sums in order to a final decree," was held not to be a final decree, and the appeal was dismissed.

The above cases are sufficient to show the grounds on which appeals in chancery are dismissed. To authorize an appeal, the decree must be final in all matters within the pleadings, so that an affirmance of the decree will end the suit. To apply this test, in all cases, cannot be difficult.

In no legal sense of the term is the decree now before us a final one. The basis of the decree, embracing the equities in the bill, is found, but the distribution among the parties in interest depends upon the facts to be reported by the master. It is his duty, under the interlocutory decree, to balance the equities by ascertaining what has been expended on the property, and what has been received by each of the claimants; and also every other matter which should have a bearing and influence in the distribution of the property. Until the court shall have acted upon this report and sanctioned it, giving to each of the devisees his share of the estate under the will, the decree is not final.

There may be cases in which the attention of the court has not been drawn to the character of the decree appealed from; but such an inadvertence cannot constitute an exception to the rule.



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The decision of the court, under the law, establishes the rule which must govern in appeals from the circuit courts.

The case of *Whiting v. Bank of the United States*, 13 Peters, 6, is supposed to conflict with the above rule; but that was a decree of foreclosure and sale of the mortgaged premises. This was held to be a final decree, the order for sale having an effect similar to that of an execution on a judgment.

The case of *Michaud et al. v. Girod et al.*, 4 How. 503, was an interlocutory decree in the circuit court, and which case, being appealed, was heard and decided by this court. But, from the report, there appears to have been no exception taken to the appeal, and it may be presumed to have escaped the notice of the court.

\*The case of *Forgay et al. v. Conrad*, 6 How. 201, [\* 202] was an appeal from an interlocutory decree, which was sustained, though objected to. But this decision was made under the peculiar circumstances of that case. The decree was, that certain deeds should be set aside as fraudulent and void; that certain lands and slaves should be delivered up to the complainant; that one of the defendants should pay a certain sum of money to the complainant; that the complainant should have execution for these several matters; that the master should take an account of the profits of the lands and slaves, and also an account of certain money and notes, and then said decree concluded as follows, viz: "And so much of said bill as contains or relates to matters hereby referred to the master for a report is retained for further decree in the premises," &c.

It will be observed, that two deeds for lots in New Orleans were declared to be null and void, and certain slaves owned by Forgay, one of the appellants, were directed to be sold on execution, as also the real estate and the proceeds distributed among the bankrupt's creditors; and if the defendants principally interested could not take an appeal until the return of the master, their property, under the decree, would have been disposed of beyond the reach of the appellate court, so that an appeal would be useless. This was the principal ground on which the appeal was sustained, although it was stated that this part of the decree was final.

The court say: "The decree upon these matters might and ought to have awaited the master's report; and when the accounts were before the court, then every matter in dispute might have been adjudicated in one final decree; and if either party thought himself aggrieved, the whole matter would be brought



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here and decided in one appeal, and the object and policy of the acts of congress upon this subject carried into effect.”

The decree before us is not final, consequently it must be dismissed.

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JAMES A. ABBOTT AND WIFE, Plaintiffs in Error, v. THE ESSEX COMPANY, Defendants.

18 H. 202.

CONSTRUCTION OF A DEVISE.

The testator, by his will, said: “I give to my two sons, John and Jacob Kittredge, all my lands and buildings in Andover, except the land I have given to my son Thomas,” describing the lands; also all my live stock, husbandry tools, bonds, notes, &c., &c., to my sons John and Jacob, to be equally divided between them. He also provided that out of this his debts and funeral expenses should be paid, and then added: “It is my will that if either of my said sons, namely, John and Jacob, should happen to die without any lawful heirs of their own, then the share of him who may first de- cease may accrue to the other and his heirs.” Held, that John and Jacob took an estate in fee-simple, and that the share of the one of the sons who should die first without issue in the lifetime of the other should in that event go over to the other son by way of executory devise.

THE case was brought by writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Massachusetts.

Jacob Kittredge died first, leaving children surviving him. John Kittredge died afterwards, never having been married. The de- mandants are the granddaughter of Jacob Kittredge and her hus- band; the surviving son and surviving grandchild of said Jacob Kittredge having conveyed to them.

The case was argued by *Mr. Abbott* and *Mr. Fessenden*, for plain- tiffs in error.

*Mr. Merwin* and *Mr. Loring*, for defendants.

The briefs are elaborate, and filled with the learning of the courts on the question raised by the necessity of construing the will.

[ \* 211 ] \* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

The questions submitted to our consideration in this case arise on the construction of the will of John Kittredge, de- ceased, and on the following devise to his sons:

“*Item.* I give to my two sons, namely, John and Jacob Kit- tredge, all my lands and buildings in Andover aforesaid, except- ing the land I gave to my son Thomas aforesaid, which buildings

consist of dwelling-houses, barns, corn-house, grist-mill, and cider-mill, all of every denomination; also, all my live stock of cattle, horses, sheep, and swine, and all my husbandry utensils of every denomination, and all my tools that may be useful for tending the mills aforesaid; and also all my bonds and notes of hand and book accounts, together with what money I may leave at my decease; and my wearing apparel, I \*give the same to [\* 212] my said sons, John and Jacob Kittredge, to be equally divided between them; and in consideration of what I have given my said sons, John and Jacob Kittredge, the executor of this testament, hereinafter named, is hereby ordered to see that all my just debts and funeral charges, together with all the legacies in this will mentioned, be paid out of that part of my estate I have given to my two sons, John and Jacob Kittredge, to whom I give each one bed and bedding.

“*Item.* It is my will, that if either of my said sons, namely, John and Jacob Kittredge, should happen to die without any lawful heirs of their own, then the share of him who may first decease shall accrue to the other survivor and his heirs.”

On the trial, the demandants requested the court to instruct the jury, “that John and Jacob took the real estate therein devised in equal moieties of an estate tail general, with cross-remainders in fee-simple.” But the court instructed the jury, “that the testator’s said sons, John and Jacob, took an estate in fee-simple, and that the share of the one of the sons, who should first die without issue, in the lifetime of the other, should, in that event, go over to the other son, by way of executory devise.” To this instruction the plaintiffs excepted, and now contend:

1. That the testator, by the first clause of his will, gave to John and Jacob an estate for life only.

2. That the next clause of the will enlarges the estate for life to an estate tail in each of the two sons, and, by the use of such language, the testator intended an indefinite failure of issue.

The defendants, on the contrary, maintain that, independent of the last clause, by which the estate is given over, the sons took a fee-simple. And, secondly, that the clear intention of the testator is, that both real and personal estate should pass on a definite contingency, namely, the decease of one brother without issue in the lifetime of the other.

There is, perhaps, no point of testamentary construction which has undergone such frequent discussion, and is so fruitful in cases not easily reconciled, as that now brought under our consideration. This has arisen, in a great measure, from the discrepancy between

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the popular acceptation of the phrases, "if he die without issue," "in default of issue," and similar expressions, from the established legal acceptation of them in courts of justice. It is often necessary to construe these expressions as conveying an estate tail by implication, in order to carry out the evident general intent of the testator. Such is, or ought to be, the object of all rules of interpretation; but court rules, however convenient in the disposition of cases where the intention is doubtful, cannot claim to be absolute or [ \* 213 ] of universal application. \* Hence it has been said, "that courts have been astute to defeat the application of this rule of construction, harsh in itself, and often producing results contrary to the testator's intention." If wills were always drawn by counsel learned in the law, it would be highly proper that courts should rigidly adhere to precedents, because every such instrument might justly be presumed to have been drawn with reference to them. But, in a country where, from necessity or choice, every man acts as his own scrivener, his will is subject to be perverted by the application of rules of construction of which he was wholly ignorant.

The rule laid down in *Purefoy v. Rogers*, 2 Saund. 388, "that where a contingency is limited to depend on an estate of freehold which is capable of supporting a remainder, it shall never be construed to be an executory devise," has been received and adopted in Massachusetts.

In England, and in some of the States here, it has been abolished by legislative interposition, as harsh and injurious. This rule, however, has never been construed, either in England or this country, to include cases where the title of the first taker is a fee-simple, and the contingency is definite.

In the case of *Pells v. Brown*, Cro. Jac. 590, where there was a devise "to A in fee, and, if he die without issue living, then C shall have the land," it was held to be an executory devise to C on the contingency of A dying in the lifetime of C without issue. There is no necessary conflict between this case and that of *Purefoy v. Rogers*. It is true, also, that this rule has been applied where the first taker had an estate in fee; and it is conceded, "that, unless there are expressions or circumstances from which it can be collected that these words, 'without issue,' are used in a more confined sense, they are to have their legal sense of an indefinite failure of issue;" but whenever such "expressions or circumstances" show the intention of the testator that the estate is to go over only on a definite contingency, courts will give effect to such intention. Notwithstanding the expressions in *Plunket v. Holmes*,

Sid. 47, derogatory of the case of *Pells v. Brown*, it has always been considered "a leading case, and the foundation of this branch of the law." See *Williams's Saunders*, 388, b, in note.

In *Porter v. Bradley*, 3 T. R. 143, where lands were devised to A and his heirs, and if he die leaving no issue behind him, then over, it was decided that the limitation over was good by way of executory devise; and Lord Kenyon acknowledges the case of *Pells v. Brown* to be "the foundation and *magna charta* of this branch of the law," deciding that the words, "leaving no issue behind him," showed clearly that the testator did not contemplate an indefinite failure of issue.

\* In the case of *Roe v. Jeffery*, 7 T. R. 589, where the [ \* 214 ] devise was "to A and his heirs, and in case he should depart this life and leave no issue, then to B, C, and D, and the survivor or survivors of them, share and share alike," it was held that the devise to B, C, and D, was a good executory devise. In delivering the opinion of the court in that case, Lord Kenyon observes: "This is a question of construction, depending on the intention of the party; and nothing can be clearer than if an estate be given to A in fee, and by way of an executory devise, an estate be given over, which may take place within a life or lives in being, &c., the latter is good by way of executory devise. The question, therefore, in this and similar cases is, whether, from the whole context of the will, we can collect when an estate is given to A and his heirs forever, but if he die without issue, then over, the testator meant without issue living at the death of the first taker. The rule was settled as long ago as in the reign of James I., in the case of *Pells v. Brown*. That case has never been questioned or shaken, and is considered as a cardinal point on this head of the law."

Without referring to any more of the numerous English and American cases brought to our notice by the learned counsel, of like tenor, it will be sufficient to notice the case of *Richardson v. Noyes*, 2 Mass. 56. There the devise was "to my three sons, A, B, and C, all my other lands, &c.; also my will is, that if either of them should die without children, the survivor or survivors of them to hold the interest or share of each or any of them so dying without children, as aforesaid;" and it was held to pass an estate in fee-simple, determinable on the contingency of either of them dying without issue, and vesting by way of executory devise. See also the case of *Ray v. Enslen*, 2 Mass. 554. These cases fully adopt the principles of the English cases we have just referred to. The case of *Parker v. Parker*, 5 Metc. 134, has been quoted as

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containing a contrary doctrine; but it does not appear that the question of definite or indefinite failure of issue was made by the counsel or adverted to by the court in the decision.

Our inquiry must be, therefore, from an examination of the whole context of this will—

1. Whether, independent of the second clause, by which the estate is limited over, the sons took an estate in fee-simple, or only a life estate; and,

2. Whether he intended to give over the share of each son to the other, on the contingency of his death, without issue living at the time of his decease, or upon an indefinite failure of issue.

1. There are no words of inheritance in this first clause of the devise, to John and Jacob; but such words are not absolutely [\* 215] necessary in a will to the gift of a fee. The subject of this devise is described as “that part of my estate.” The word “estate,” or “that part of my estate,” has always been construed to describe not only the land devised, but the whole interest of the testator in the subject of the devise; thus, a devise of “my estate, consisting of thirty acres of land, situate, &c.,” will carry a fee. Moreover, the legacy given for the maintenance of Sarah Devinny, “to be paid out of that part of my estate given to John and Jacob,” would be defeated by their death before she arrived at the age of eighteen, if the devise to them was a life estate only. The intention of a testator must be drawn from the whole context of his will. And it is not necessary to look alone at the words of the gift itself to ascertain the intention of the testator as to the *quantum* of the estate devised, if it can be gathered, from expressions used in any part of it, what he supposed or intended to be the nature and extent of it. It will not admit of a doubt, also, that the testator intended that both of his sons should have the same estate in the devised premises, which were “to be equally divided between them.” John is charged personally, in respect of the estate given him, with the payment of all the debts and legacies. The testator calls it the “consideration” to be paid for that part of his estate given to his two sons; and though John was appointed executor, whose duty it became, as such, to see to the payment of the debts and legacies, the charges are to be paid by him at all events out of the estate devised to him and Jacob, and not out of the rents and profits only. By their acceptance of the devise, they became personally liable. In such cases, it is well settled that the devisee takes a fee, without words of inheritance.

On this point, therefore, we are of opinion that John and Jacob

each took a fee in their respective "share" or moiety of the estate devised to them.

2. It remains to consider the effect of the second clause of the will, which is in these words: "It is my will, that, if either of my said sons, namely, John or Jacob, should happen to die without any lawful heirs of their own, then the share of him who may first decease shall accrue to the other survivor and his heirs."

Viewing this clause free from the confusion of mind produced by the numerous conflicting decisions of courts, and untrammelled by artificial rules of construction, we think that no two minds could differ as to the clear intention of the testator. By "lawful heirs of their own," he evidently meant lineal descendants or "issue."

The contingency contemplated is as definite as language can make it—"if either son should happen to die without heirs of their own during the life of the other."

\* The person to take, on the happening of this contin- [\* 216] gency, is precisely described—"the other survivor." It is true, that cases may be found which decide that the term "survivor" does not of itself necessarily import a definite failure of issue, and no doubt there are many cases where it would be necessary to disregard the obvious import of this term, in order to carry out the general intent of a testator, otherwise apparent; but a large number of English, and nearly all the American, cases acknowledge the force of this term as evidence of the testator's intending a definite contingency. The other words of this clause, connected with it, clearly describe a definite contingency, and the individual who is to take on its happening: "the share of him who shall first decease without heirs shall accrue to the other survivor"—on the death of one, the other is to take—a definite contingency and a definite individual.

Again, it is the "share," or the estate previously given, not of him who dies without issue, generally, but of him who may first decease, that is given over to the other survivor. This "share" also consisted of personal and real property. As to the former, the testator could certainly not mean an indefinite failure of issue, yet both, personalty and realty, are within the same category, and, as one "share," they are subject to the same contingency. It is said to be a rule of construction, that the words "dying without issue," will be construed to mean "an indefinite failure of issue" as to real estate; but with regard to personalty, it shall be taken to mean "a failure at the death." There are several cases to this effect. Lord Kenyon, in speaking of them in *Roe v.*



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Jeffery, very justly remarks that "the distinction taken in *Forth v. Chapman*, 1 P. Wms. 663, that the very same words in a will should receive one construction when applied to one portion of the devise, and another construction as applied to another, is not reconcilable with reason." Without making an array of cases, we may state that many of the English, and nearly all the American cases, seem to concur in the truth and force of this observation; and consider a "share" of an estate, consisting of both realty and personalty, given over on a contingency to the "survivor," as clear evidence that the testator did not intend an indefinite failure of issue. A rule of construction which would give different meanings to the same words, in the same sentence, could only be tolerated where, from the whole context of the will, it is evident that without such construction the general intent of the testator as to the disposition of his realty would be frustrated.

Lastly, construing this clause as providing for an indefinite failure of issue, and as vesting each of the sons with an estate tail by implication, the survivor would take an estate in [ \* 217 ] \* fee-simple in his brother's share, while he had an estate in tail in his own; a result most improbable, which could hardly have been contemplated by the testator, and which ought not to be imputed to him without clear expressions indicating such an intention.

On the whole, we are of opinion that the instructions given to the jury by the court below are correct, and that the judgment should be affirmed.

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PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, Plaintiff in Error, v. JAMES SWANN and others, Garnishees.

18 H. 217.

RIGHTS OF ATTACHING CREDITOR AS AGAINST OTHER CREDITORS ASSERTING SUPERIOR EQUITIES.

Plaintiff in error, having recovered a judgment against the canal company, served a writ of foreign attachment on the goods, rights, credits, &c., of the company in the hands of defendants. Defendants held certain bonds, as trustees, for payment of specific debts of the canal company, and it appeared that after all these were paid there remained a large sum in the hands of defendants. Held, 1. That the canal company could have sued defendants at law and recovered this balance. 2. That by the law of Maryland this was the test of their liability to an attachment for that fund in their hands. 3. That any party having a paramount *legal* claim on that fund could have intervened in the present suit and asserted his right. 4. That if such persons had only an equitable right, they must assert it by a bill of interpleader in chancery. 5. That a suit in chancery to which the plaintiff in this suit was no party, or if a



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party, the suit was dismissed as to him, without prejudice to his legal rights in express terms, cannot be used to defeat his right to recover in this garnishee proceeding.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Maryland, and the case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Davis*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Campbell*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 219 ]

This is a writ of error to the circuit court of the United States for the district of Maryland.

The plaintiff in error having recovered a judgment in that court against the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, sued out a writ of foreign attachment against the lands and tenements, goods, chattels, and credits of that company, and on the 4th day of June, 1841, it was laid in the hands of James Swann and John S. Gittings. The garnishees having appeared and answered certain interrogatories, pleaded that at the time of laying the attachment they had not any goods, chattels, or credits of the company in their hands, and upon the trial a bill of exceptions was taken, from which it appears that the plaintiff offered evidence tending to prove, that, by an indenture, bearing date on the 15th day of April, 1840, between the company of the first part, and the garnishees, together with William Gunton, (who, residing out of the district, was not served with process,) of the second part, the party of the first part transferred to the party of the second part, two hundred and forty-eight bonds of the State of Maryland, each for two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, in trust to pay, from the proceeds thereof, such promissory notes of the company, described in a schedule annexed to \* the indenture, as [ \* 220 ] should be presented to the trustees at the Chesapeake Bank in Baltimore, within six months from the date of the indenture; and at the end of the six months, to pay to the company any money, and to deliver to the company any of the bonds which might then remain in their hands, whether all the notes mentioned in the schedule should then be paid or not.

The plaintiff further offered evidence to prove, that Gittings, with the assent of the other trustees, sold the bonds prior to the 28th day of February, 1841, for the aggregate sum of \$344,117 $\frac{2}{100}$ ; and that the sums received by him for interest on the bonds amounted to \$16,958 $\frac{62}{100}$ , amounting in the whole to the sum of \$361,075 $\frac{88}{100}$ . The disbursements and payments made by the trustees in the exe-

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cution of the trust, appeared to have been \$324,825 $\frac{18}{100}$ , leaving a balance due from the trustees, after the complete execution of the trust declared in the indenture, of \$36,250 $\frac{70}{100}$ .

Upon this state of facts, we think the plaintiff entitled to a verdict.

The trust was for the payment of specified debts, which should be presented to the trustees before a fixed day. The payments made, and the sums received in execution of the trust, were liquidated sums ascertained with entire precision. The trust was completely executed, and the balance remaining in the hands of the trustees was a sum certain.

Under these circumstances, an action at law for money had and received could be sustained by the canal company against the trustees, they not having sealed the deed.

In Case *v. Roberts*, (Holt's N. P. C. 500,) Burrough, J., states the rule on this subject to be: "If money is paid into the hands of a trustee for a specific purpose, it cannot be recovered in an action for money had and received, until that specific purpose is shown to be at an end. If the plaintiff show that the specific purpose has been satisfied, that it has absorbed a certain sum only, and left a balance, such balance (the trust being closed) becomes a clear and liquidated sum, for which an action will lie at law." This statement of the rule has been approved, and in conformity with it many cases decided. See, among others, *English v. Blundell*, 8 Car. & P. 332; *Edwards v. Bates*, 7 Man. & Gr. 590; *Allen v. Impett*, 8 Taunt. 263; *Weston v. Barker*, 12 Johns. R. 276.

This case, thus presented, comes within that rule; and as an action at law could have been sustained by the canal company to recover the liquidated balance remaining in the hands of the trustees, the plaintiff could subject that balance to the satisfaction of his judgment, by attaching it as a credit in the hands of the trustees.

[ \* 221 ] \* But, in addition to the evidence above referred to, the bill of exceptions contains the following statement concerning evidence introduced by the defendants:

"That on the 25th of June, 1841, a bill was filed in the court of chancery, in Maryland, against the said garnishees and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, and others, by the Bank of Potomac, claiming as assignee of the surplus which remained after satisfying the trusts under the deed of April, 1840, and praying an account and settlement of the trust, which bill is in the following words: It being agreed between the parties that the said bill and other portions of the pleadings or proceedings in that case, herein-

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after mentioned to have been produced and read, shall be received in evidence and have the same effect as if the whole record was produced, and such pleadings or proceedings read from it.”

Then follows a copy of the bill, of an opinion of the acting chancellor, and of the final decree in the cause. McLaughlin, the present plaintiff in error, is not made a party to this bill. How he came into the cause as a party does not appear. If by the amended bill, he ceased to be a party before the final decree, because that decree recites that the amended bill was dismissed by the complainants before the final submission of the cause to the chancellor. Nor does it appear for what purpose McLaughlin was made a party, or whether he at any time submitted his rights, as an attaching creditor, by a process out of the circuit court of the United States, to a court of the State of Maryland, in a suit in equity, begun after his attachment was laid. But it does not appear to be material to consider either of these particulars, because the final decree concludes with this clause:

“And it is further adjudged, ordered, and decreed, that this cause be, and the same is hereby, dismissed as against the defendant, Patrick McLaughlin, and this decree is passed without prejudice to the rights of the said McLaughlin against any and every of the parties to this suit.”

Either because the chancellor deemed it improper to pass on his rights acquired by an attachment under process of a court of the United States, or for some other reason, he has made a decree, which in express terms leaves McLaughlin in all respects unaffected by that suit.

We think, also, that so much of the record of the chancery suit as is in this record, though it was properly read in evidence to prove that such proceedings were had, and such decree made, is not evidence of any facts found by the chancellor, either in his opinion or in the decree.

The bill having been dismissed as against him, and all his rights, as against any and every of the parties, expressly saved,  
\* there has been no matter tried or adjudicated as between [ \* 222 ]  
him and any other party, and he stands, in all respects,  
as if he had never been a party to the suit.

It was insisted at the argument that the stipulation already extracted from the bill of exceptions made the chancellor's opinion evidence, as against McLaughlin, of the facts it finds. This was denied by the plaintiff's counsel; and, however probable we may think the inference, that the chancellor's opinion was treated as evidence by the circuit court, with the consent of the plaintiff, yet

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we cannot say this appears to us judicially, by the bill of exceptions. The stipulation only extends so far as to make the parts of the record, which were read, have the same effect as if the whole record had been put in. The whole record might have properly been put in, to prove what was done and decreed in that suit, *valeat quantum*. But when it appeared that, so far as respected the plaintiff and his rights, nothing was done or decreed, his rights in this suit could not be affected by anything appearing therein, or deducible therefrom. In our opinion, therefore, the case is presented to us upon the evidence, extraneous to the record of the State court. Upon that evidence, we think the jury would have been authorized and required to find for the plaintiff; and, consequently, that the instruction given in the court below, that their verdict must be for the defendants, was erroneous.

We express no opinion upon the defenses supposed to arise out of the facts found in the opinion of the chancellor. If the facts, which may be proved in defense, on another trial, should amount to a legal defense to an action for money had and received, if brought by the canal company, they would also amount to a defense to this attachment. If they only show outstanding equities, in third persons, of such a character that a court of law cannot take notice of them, they must be availed of, if valid, by a bill brought by such third persons against McLaughlin, or by a bill of interpleader by the trustees. The attachment invests the plaintiff with the same right of action which belonged to the canal company; and no defense, which could not have been made at law to an action by the company, can be made to the attachment, which is but a substituted mode of pursuing the same right. *Wanzer v. Truly*, 17 How. 584. So far as respects equitable rights of set-off by the garnishee, a different rule has been followed in Massachusetts. *Boston Type Co. v. Mortimer*, 7 Pick. 166; *Hathaway v. Russell*, 16 Mass. 473; *Green v. Nelson*, 12 Met. 567. And, in the absence of an equitable jurisdiction in that State, there has been, until recently, no mode of giving effect to the equitable rights of the garnishee, or of third persons, save in the [ \* 223 ] process of garnishment, or \* possibly by an action on the case in some instances. *Foster v. Sinkler*, 4 Mass. 450; *Hawes v. Langton*, 8 Pick. 67; *Adams v. Cordis*, 8 Pick. 260.

But, in other States, it has been held that only legal defenses can be made to the attachment. *Pennell v. Grubb*, 13 Penn. R. 552; *Taylor v. Gardner*, 2 Wash. C. C. Rep. 488; *Loftin v. Shackelford*, 17 Alabama, 455; *Edwards v. Delaplaine*, 2 Harrington, 322; *Watkins v. Field*, 1 English, 391.

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We are not aware that this subject has come under the examination of the courts of Maryland in any reported case. But in a State where the legal and equitable jurisdictions are distinct, and in a court of the United States, having full equity powers, we consider that a garnishee should stand as nearly as possible in the same position he would have occupied if sued at law by his creditor; and if he, or any third person, has equitable rights to the fund in his hands, they should be asserted in that jurisdiction which alone can suitably examine and completely protect them.

The judgment of the circuit court is to be reversed, and the cause remanded, with directions to issue a *venire facias de novo*.

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THE STEAMBOAT NEW YORK.

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THOMAS C. DURANT and others, Appellants, v. ISAAC P. REA, Appellee.

18 H. 223.

ADMIRALTY—COLLISION IN NEW YORK HARBOR.

1. A steamboat descending the Hudson river in the night, in the harbor of New York, at the rate of eight miles an hour, with many barges in tow, at a point where the river is filled with sail vessels, is guilty of gross carelessness, and is responsible for the resulting injury to such sailing vessel.
2. There is also neglect and want of care, if there is no other watch on the steamboat than the master, who is at the time engaged in the general care of the vessel and her tow.
3. The statute of the State of New York, requiring vessels lying in the harbor to have a light suspended in the rigging twenty feet above the deck, does not control the courts of the United States in admiralty cases, as deciding on the fault of the vessel, if she had such light as the general rules of admiralty require. There are exceptions to this rule stated in the opinion.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the southern district of New York.

The case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Martin* and *Mr. Cutting*, for appellants.

*Mr. Betts*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 224 ]

This is an appeal in admiralty from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the southern district of New York.

The libel was filed by the owner of the brig Sarah Johanna against the steamboat, for a collision in the harbor of the city of

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New York. The brig was lying at anchor in the North river, off pier No. 6, nearer to the Jersey than the New York shore, her bow heading up the river, there being at the time a strong ebb-tide, and wind heavy from the northwest. The collision occurred between four and five o'clock in the morning of the 4th of November, 1850—the river at this place being filled with vessels at anchor in the vicinity of the brig. The morning considerably dark.

The steamboat was passing down the North river to get round to her berth in the East river. She had in tow eleven heavily loaded barges and canal boats, the first tier being three abreast on each side of her, the other boats astern, towed by lines attached to this first tier. The steamer, with the tows, occupied a breadth of some three hundred feet, and from three hundred and fifty to four hundred feet in length, her bows projecting some sixty feet ahead of the tows. She entered this thicket of vessels, at anchor in the river, at a rate of speed from eight to ten miles an hour, and, as we have seen, with a strong ebb-tide and heavy northwest wind; and, while passing through them, the centre tow-boat of the tier on the starboard side struck the bow of the brig, smashing her timbers, cut-water, and bowsprit, and otherwise doing great damage to the vessel.

The captain of the steamboat admits that he saw the brig from three to five hundred feet off before the collision, but, as he could not stop his boat in less than within ten or fifteen of her lengths, the collision was inevitable. He admits, also, that it would have required all her power to have stopped within that distance, as it would have depended upon the way the tow-boats were managed. The rear tows were not so fastened, he observes, as to prevent their swinging, and could not have been. He gave orders instantly, on discerning the brig, to starboard the helm, and passed the same order to the tow-boats. This was undoubtedly the proper order at the time, under the circumstances, but with the rate of speed of the steamer, and encumbered as she was with her tows, it was unavailing.

[ \* 225 ] \* Upon this statement of the facts in the case, it is manifest the steamer was grossly in fault in entering this crowd of vessels at anchor in the harbor, at the rate of speed with which she was moving, especially in the night time. A collision with some of them thus lying in her trail was the natural, if not inevitable, result. Lying at anchor, they were disabled from adopting any measure to get out of her way, and encumbered as she was with tows, she was not in a condition to adopt any prompt and effective manœuvre to avoid the danger. The continuance of the



speed, therefore, under the circumstances of wind and tide, and encumbrance and embarrassment of the tows, was the grossest carelessness and neglect of duty, without the semblance of excuse. Indeed, the term carelessness hardly expresses the degree of fault; under the circumstances, it seems almost to have been willful, or what, in degree, should be regarded as equally criminal.

The steamboat was also in fault in not having a look-out at the the time, properly stationed. The captain admits that no person was stationed on the deck as a look-out. He claims to have been on that duty himself, although he stood upon the upper deck, some fifteen feet above the water, and sixty feet from the bow of the steamer, and was at the time engaged in giving directions for the management of her and her tows.

We have had occasion frequently to lay down the rule, that it is the duty of steamboats traversing waters where sailing vessels are often met with, to have a trustworthy and constant look-out, stationed at a part of the vessel best adapted for that purpose, and whose whole business was to discern vessels ahead, or approaching, so as to give the earliest notice to those in charge of the navigation of the vessel; and that the omission, in case of a collision, would be *prima facie* evidence of fault on the part of the steamer. 12 How. 459; 10 Ib. 585.

It is insisted, however, on the part of the steamboat, that the brig was also in fault, in not showing a light while lying at anchor. We have looked carefully into the evidence on this branch of the case, and are satisfied that the clear weight of it is in favor of the libellants, and that a proper light was kept constantly in the fore-rigging, some seventeen feet above the deck.

Again, it is claimed that, admitting the brig had a light sufficient, within the requirements of the admiralty rule, still she was in fault in not showing a light, in conformity with the statutes of New York, which required it should be suspended in the rigging, at least twenty feet above deck. 1 Rev. Stats. p. 685, § 12; also Sess. Laws, 1839, p. 322.

This is a rule of navigation prescribed by the laws of New York, and is doubtless binding upon her own courts, but cannot  
\* regulate the decisions of the federal courts, administer- [ \* 226 ]  
ing the general admiralty law. They can be governed only by the principles peculiar to that system, as generally recognized in maritime countries, modified by acts of congress independently of local legislation. The Johanna was a foreign ship, engaged in the general commerce of the country, not in the purely internal trade of a State. The Bark Chusan, 2 Story, 456.



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We agree, an exception to this general principle is, the regulation of steamboats and other water craft in the ports and harbors of the States, which is required for the accommodation and safety of vessels resorting thither in the pursuits of business and commerce. These are police regulations in aid and furtherance of commerce, enacted by the local authorities, who have a knowledge of the wants of the locality, and a deep interest in properly providing for them.

We are satisfied the decree of the court below is right, and should be affirmed.

Mr. Justice DANIEL. I dissent from the decision just pronounced. This record brings before us what the testimony shows to be a case of simple tort or trespass, alleged to have been committed in the harbor of New York, which might have been disposed of upon principles and under proceedings familiar to the habits of the people of the country, and at a greater economy of time and expense than is necessarily incident to proceedings like those just sanctioned. I should always be reluctant, were there no considerations other than those of mere convenience, or even of habit or prejudice involved, to interfere with the local institutions or customs of States or communities. It is proper to leave to these, wherever no paramount obligation forbids it, the adoption and practice of such local institutions, or local prejudices, if they may be so denominated. Much higher and stronger is the motive for forbearing such interference, where the latter cannot be clearly traced to an undoubted legitimate authority. I hold it as an axiom or postulate, that, by the admiralty jurisdiction vested by the constitution of the United States, a power has not been, nor was ever intended to be, delegated to those courts, to supersede or control the internal polity of the States in providing for the preservation of property, or for the regulation of order, or the security of personal rights. These subjects constitute a class, the control of which is inseparable from political or social existence in the States, every encroachment upon which is an instance of unwarrantable assumption in the federal government, and of progressive decline in the health and vigor in those of the States. Especially does it seem strange to [ \* 227 ] me that there should \*anywhere exist a tendency to extend a system which, however attended with advantage when limited to the necessities in which it originated, must, almost in every instance, be attended with inconvenience, and not unfrequently with ruin to one side of the litigant parties, by operating the seizure and transmutation of property, and, of course, the sus-

pension if not the destruction of all business in which that property formed a necessary instrument—and this, too, before an adjudication upon the rights of litigants can possibly be had; and although such adjudication may be in favor of the person subjected to the consequences just mentioned. The guards which the wisdom and beneficence of the common law and equity jurisprudence of the country have thrown around the rights of property will tolerate no consequences like these; they require judgment before execution; and this single consideration, were there no other, should cause them to be cherished and maintained, rather than impugned or evaded.

The case before us furnishes a precedent, a pregnant precedent, for interference with the harbor regulations of every town in the Union, and this, too, under the ambitious and undefinable pretensions of a great system of maritime jurisprudence. Truly it may be said, that this pretension entirely reverses the maxim of that venerable, though neglected common law, *De minimis non curat lex*; a trespass in the harbor of New York would else be a quarry upon which it would disdain to stoop.

But, independently of the objection to the decision in this case, which, in my view of it, results from the absence of power under the constitution, upon the principles of justice and fairness, were there no restriction upon the powers of the court, its decision is altogether unwarranted.

The evidence, correctly compared, so far from fixing upon the steamboat the fault of a collision, shows that collision to have been very probably, if not certainly, the result of delinquency on the part of the brig. It seems to have become a favored doctrine that, in all cases of collision between steamboats and sailing vessels, the burden of proof, either for excuse or exculpation, is to be placed on the steamboat, because it is said that she is in a great degree independent of the winds and the tide, and possesses entire control of her movements. This rule, when applied within the limits of reason and the bounds of unquestioned or obvious right as to all parties, is just, and should be enforced; but, if strained or perverted to the justification or toleration of willful neglect, or caprice, or perverseness on the one side, and to the extension of penal infliction on those who have been involved, by the indulgence of such neglect or perverseness, the rule becomes the source of greater mischiefs than it professes to \* pre- [\* 228] vent or cure. It imposes, upon an important class of interests in society, conditions and burdens incompatible with the prosperity or even with the existence of those interests. By the

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rule thus expounded--or if a steamer, merely because she is not propelled by the winds or the tides, is, under all circumstances, bound to avoid a vessel navigated by sails, it would follow that, should a vessel of the latter description wantonly or designedly place herself in the track of a steamer, or even put chase to her with that object, the steamer would nevertheless be responsible for the effects of a collision thus brought about.

Such an application of the rule cannot be correct. Steamers have their rights upon the waters as certain and entire as can be those of sailing vessels; and the exercise of those rights, under the injunctions of integrity and discretion, is all that can justly be demanded of them. There can be no sound reason why they should be placed upon a ground of comparative disadvantage with reference to others. Why should there be placed under a species of judicial ban a mean of navigation and intercourse which, in regard to commerce, science, literature, art, wealth, comfort, and civilization, has, in a few years, advanced the world by more than a thousand years, perhaps, beyond the point at which the previous and ordinary modes of navigation would possibly have attained? I am most unwilling to cripple or needlessly or unjustly to burden the means of such benefits to mankind by harsh and oppressive exactions.

The danger and injustice of such a course are, in my judgment, exemplified by the testimony in this case, and by the conclusions deduced by the court from that testimony.

The witnesses examined in this case are of three classes or descriptions: 1. Those who belonged to the crew of the brig. 2. Those who were engaged in the management of the steamer. 3. The owners or crews of the several barges then in tow by the steamer.

It is admitted on all sides that the night on which the collision occurred was dark, and that the brig was anchored in the much frequented and even greatly thronged track of vessels of every description--in fact, in the very port of New York. And it is equally shown that, by the laws of the State of New York, and by rules of the harbor, vessels thus situated are required to hoist a light at the elevation of twenty feet above the deck. There are no laws of the State, nor regulations of the port, inhibiting ingress and egress into and from the harbor during the night, nor prescribing the degree of speed at which these movements shall be accomplished; and any such regulation would be inconvenient, and, to say the least of it, useless, where the precaution of a light, such as that prescribed by the law and the regulation of [ \* 229 ] \* the port, was used. And it would seem to be as absurd

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and as vain to prescribe a given speed to a steam vessel entering or leaving the harbor, as it would be to attempt the same thing as to sailing vessels, whose speed, at least, must depend upon the state of the wind at the time of her progress. Every necessity, every reasonable precaution, every guide, is supplied by a sufficient light, exhibited at the proper time and place.

The statements of the crew of the brig are vague, and by no means consistent, with respect to the precautions used on that vessel. They cannot state the precise time at which a light was displayed, nor that at which it was taken down to be used for other than the purposes of a signal; nor do they concur as to the hour at which the collision occurred, nor as to the lapse of time between the lowering of the signal light, for the purpose of paying out chain, and the fact of collision. They do agree in stating the lowering, and in the use of the light for another purpose than that of a signal, shortly before the collision; and in the further important fact that the light, when up, was suspended several feet below the elevation required by the law and the harbor regulations.

It is an opinion frequently expressed, and which seems to have become trite with many persons, with reference to cases of collision, that the crews of the different vessels are almost certain to swear to such facts as will justify the conduct of their own vessel; or, in other words, will excuse or justify themselves, and cast the imputation of blame on the opposing vessel or party, even at the cost of perjury; and that, therefore, little or no faith can be given the oaths of the officers and crews of the respective vessels. With every proper allowance for the influence of selfishness, or alarm, or falsehood, it may be remarked that extreme opinions, like the one just stated, are themselves calculated to lead to error, and would often defeat the purpose which the diffidence or mistrust on which they rest would seek to attain. Collisions between vessels engaged in the navigation, either on the ocean or on rivers, rarely occur in the presence of spectators wholly detached from and indifferent to the events which really take place. The scene of such events is usually on the track of the ocean, the course of rivers, midst the darkness of night, where and when there are none to testify save those who participate in the catastrophe; and if such persons, under the influence of a foregone opinion, are to be set aside as unworthy of faith, decisions upon cases of collision will, and indeed must, become so entirely the result of conjecture, or of an arbitrary rule, as to challenge but a small share of public confidence; and what is of more importance, may be the instruments of injustice and oppression. The error and inconsistency

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[ \* 230 ] of this rule \* is strikingly exemplified in the present instance, in which it is seen that the testimony on which the decision professes mainly to be founded is said to be that of the captain of the steamer, the party said to be in default—a source of evidence denounced by the rule as unworthy of belief. It so happens, however, by a conjuncture quite unusual, that the case before us is placed beyond the operation of the rule of evidence above adverted to. Of the fourteen witnesses who testify on behalf of the defendant in the libel, seven of them did not belong to the steamer. They were composed of the masters and crews of the barges then in tow of the former, and whose lives and property were imperiled by any misconduct of her conductors, with regard to whom there is no conceivable ground for bias or partiality on the part of these witnesses. Yet it is explicitly declared by them all—and they all appear to have been awake and in a situation to observe what was passing—that not one of them saw a light of any description or in any position displayed from the brig; that the latter was perceived as a dark spot upon the water, only when approached so closely as to be at the immediate point of collision. It is incomprehensible to my mind how this could have been the case had there been lights from the brig, and especially at the proper elevation prescribed by law. Such lights must have been in some degree perceptible, instead of the vessel being perceived only at the very point of contact, as a dark spot upon the water. But if in truth the brig had lights at all, provided they were placed in a situation to render them invisible, or on a place below that prescribed by law, she is as obnoxious to censure as if she displayed no lights. The steamer is proved to have been abundantly lighted. To excuse a departure from the law, either in failing to exhibit any lights, or displaying such as were insufficient or placed in an improper position, and still more to make such delinquency the ground of reclamation for injuries resulting therefrom, appears to me to be the award of a premium for a breach of duty, and an invitation to similar offenses by others.

Without a further detail of the testimony in this case, I must say that the preponderance of that testimony is, in my judgment, against the libellant upon the merits. Independently, therefore, of the objection to the jurisdiction of the court, were I at liberty to disregard that objection, I think that the libel should not have been sustained. Upon the question of jurisdiction, it is my opinion that the libel should have been dismissed apart from the merits, and that the case should by this court be remanded to the circuit court, with directions to dismiss the libel, with costs.

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Ship Howard v. Wissman.

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## THE SHIP HOWARD.

SHIP HOWARD v. FREDERICK WISSMAN.

18 H. 231.

ADMIRALTY—DAMAGED GOODS—BILL OF LADING—PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE OF SOUNDNESS.

1. A bill of lading acknowledging receipt of goods in good order imposes on the party giving it the necessity of overcoming this *prima facie* case by sufficient proof to the contrary.
2. In this case the evidence satisfies the court so clearly that the goods (potatoes) were unsound when received, that on that ground the judgment of the district court, affirmed in the circuit court, is reversed.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the northern district of New York. Case fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Johnson* and *Mr. Donohue*, for appellant.

*Mr. Betts* and *Mr. Cutting*, for appellee.

Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a proceeding *in rem*, against a foreign vessel, by libel; charging that the libellant shipped on her, at Hamburg, in Germany, 5,004 bushels of potatoes in good order and well conditioned for the purpose of shipping, and that, by the long and willful delay of the vessel at Hamburg, and on her voyage to New York, (the port of destination,) and through the carelessness and misconduct of the master and owner, the potatoes became and were injured, decayed, and wholly lost to the libellant.

To this charge the respondents answer, that the decay of the potatoes was caused by their lying in port for some time before they were put on board; and that they were delivered to the vessel in a damp and wet state, and were not in a sound condition. The alleged negligence is denied generally.

On the foregoing issue the district court made an interlocutory decree, declaring that, "the libellant recover in this action against the ship, the value of the potatoes at Hamburg at the time they were laden on board, together with charges and expenses, unless it be proved by the claimants that they were not then in a good, sound condition; or that they perished afterwards, in consequence of inherent disease or defects existing at the time of lading the same, and not from the prolonged detention in their transportation; and it is further ordered, that it be referred to a commissioner to ascertain and report the cause of the destruction and loss of the potatoes, and their value at the time of shipment."



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[ \* 232 ] \* The commissioner reported that he had heard the parties and their testimony, and found that the potatoes were in a sound condition, and that they did not perish afterwards in consequence of inherent disease or defects existing at the time of loading the same, but that the cause of their destruction and loss was the long and protracted voyage of one hundred and nine days; and that they were worth, when shipped, (including charges,) \$2,256<sup>77</sup>/<sub>100</sub>.

This report was adopted by the district court, and a decree made accordingly.

An appeal was prosecuted by the claimants to the circuit court, where the decree below was affirmed.

The potatoes were shipped in bulk in the hold of the vessel, which mode of shipment was adopted at the instance of the libellants' agent, who superintended their stowage.

It appears that much rain fell during the time the potatoes were lying in lighters, awaiting an opportunity to ship them, being about a month; and it rained when they were alongside, and putting into the vessel; and in our opinion it is satisfactorily established, that the potatoes were wet to a considerable extent when delivered and stowed in the hold. Wulff, the stevedore, under whose immediate supervision they were stowed, deposes that they were wet, "and considering their condition, and their being shipped in bulk, he thinks they should not have been shipped across the Atlantic; for said potatoes began to steam before the sailing of the ship Howard."

The pilot of The Howard deposes, that he saw them steam out of the fore-hatch, during the passage down the river, before the vessel got outside.

Kumpel deposes, that he saw the potatoes in the lighters and on board, and that they were wet. So the other witnesses prove.

Kundsten, mate of The Howard, deposes that the potatoes began to have a bad smell when the vessel was fourteen days out. The captain says he smelt them when they were only eight days at sea.

It is proved by all the witnesses of both sides, that the potato crop of 1849 was much blighted and diseased, all over Germany; and several witnesses declare, that potatoes grown that year were generally unfit for shipment across the ocean.

The libellants' witness, Heidpriein, answers to cross-interrogatories, that he purchased and sold that year 7,200,000 pounds of potatoes; that the crop was generally unsound, and would not stand being shipped in bulk for so long a voyage as from



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Hamburg to New York; says he shipped to Hamburg—about forty German miles, (160 of ours)—by water, and that no cargo arrived, after being on the way from four to fourteen days, \* without the potatoes being in a bad condition. And [\* 233] respecting those shipped on The Howard, he states that Mr. Rawalle, Mr. Wissman's agent, applied to him to purchase potatoes; and he, having none to sell, told Mr. Rawalle of some for sale by Lehman and Cleve—which, not being sound, the deponent had refused to buy—and he understood Rawalle purchased them. Rawalle deposes that he got the potatoes he shipped of Deven and Lehman, but declares that they were not sick or diseased.

Baalmann deposes that he saw the potatoes in the lighters; they were in a bad condition and diseased, he having made examination by cutting them with a knife, and found they were not in good shipping order; and he knows that potatoes of that year's growth, shipped in bulk to England, arrived there in a worthless state, and had to be thrown overboard.

Wulff, the stevedore, says, that when he stowed the potatoes he examined them, by breaking and cutting; they appeared to be unsound and diseased.

The master of The Howard deposes, that the ship Miles took a cargo of the potatoes purchased by Rawalle for Wissman, and what The Miles did not take were taken by The Howard; that he, the master, purchased some of the potatoes that were going to The Miles, for use on The Howard, which proved to be diseased and unfit for use on being cooked.

The mate declares that the potatoes looked well outside, but when cut open they had sickness in them; that the potatoes loaded on both vessels came from the same man.

Arianson, master of the bark Miles, deposes, that more potatoes were sent to The Miles, when loading at Hamburg, than he could take on board, and that the balance were sent to The Howard; that the potatoes that he brought rotted. He discovered it five or six weeks after going to sea, by the smell, which was two or three weeks before arriving at New York.

The owner having been committed to the *prima facie* facts of soundness and good condition by his contract of affreightment, it was properly imposed on him by the district court to establish the contrary by due proof; and our opinion is, that the proof produced by him does overcome the *prima facie* presumption, and shows the potatoes of the libellant to have been unsound and unfit for shipment, and especially unfit to be shipped in bulk and wet, as was done by the libellant's agent.

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Rawalle was examined for the libellant several times. He deposes, that the potatoes were put on board in good order; that they were dry and sound; and, in his opinion, if The Howard had sailed in due time, according to her advertisement, they would have arrived at New York in a sound condition.

As a dealer in this article, the witness had very small [ \* 234 ] \* experience compared with various others examined; none of whom expressed the belief that this cargo, stowed in bulk, could have reached the port of destination uninjured. But what appears to us far more satisfactory than the speculations of witnesses is, that the cargo of The Miles was lost by decay, she being loaded at the same time and in the same manner as was The Howard, and with part of the potatoes taken from the same lighters—although The Miles made her voyage in due time.

Our conclusion is, that the libellant's case has no merits. It is therefore ordered, that the decree of the circuit court be reversed, and the cause remanded to that court, with directions to dismiss the libel with costs.

Mr. Justice DANIEL. In the opinion just pronounced, so far as it goes to demonstrate the entire want of justice in the demand of the libellant, I entirely concur, the testimony in this case having satisfactorily ascertained that the loss of the cargo was inevitable from the character of the subject of which that cargo consisted, and that by no degree of diligence or care could it have been transported in good condition to its point of destination. But, independently of these considerations, and in advance of them, there is another which of itself, in my judgment, should have prevented the claim of the libellant from being established or entertained at all in the district and circuit courts, and which should operate with equal effect in preventing its being entertained here.

This case is one of contract between the owner of property and the master of a vessel to transport a cargo of potatoes from Hamburg and to deliver them in New York. It is nothing more than a contract between the owner of property and a carrier to convey a given subject for hire. It was a contract made upon land to be terminated and executed upon the land for a stipulated compensation, and not strictly or properly a maritime contract, in any sense beyond any other contract, in the performance of which a party or agent would be compellable to cross the ocean or even to pass a river. It did not begin and terminate on the sea. Upon this contract an action might have been instituted in a court of law either upon the charter-party or the bill of lading, in conformity with

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ancient and well-settled practice, and could have been as speedily and efficiently decided in such a court as it could be in the present form of proceeding, less familiar to the common understanding and habits of the country, dubious and undefined in its claims to power, and attended with expenses beyond those incident to the usual tribunals of the land.

\* My opinion is, that for want of jurisdiction in the [ \* 235 ] case presented upon the face of the libel, that libel should have been dismissed by the circuit court, and that this court should now, for that cause, order it to be dismissed.

JOHN F. MCKINNEY, Plaintiff in Error, v. MANUEL SAVIEGO AND WIFE.

18 H. 235.

LAW OF TEXAS AS TO ALIENS HOLDING LAND.

1. By the laws of Mexico prior to the revolution in Texas, no one could hold land there who did not reside in Mexico.
2. By the law of Texas, persons who left Texas at the time of the revolution for other parts of Mexico, and continued to reside without the limits of Texas, forfeited their title to lands in Texas.
3. The introduction of the common law, as the basis of the law of Texas, did not aid such persons.
4. Consequently no citizen of Mexico dying in Mexico could transmit by inheritance title to land in Texas to a person also a citizen of Mexico.
5. The 8th section of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had reference to the territory acquired by the United States by that treaty, and did not refer to Texas.

THE case came up by writ of error to the district court for the district of Texas, and is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Hale*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Hughes*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 236 ]

The defendants (Saviego and wife) claimed, in the district court, two and one half leagues of land lying in the counties of Goliad and Refugio, in Texas, as an inheritance of Madame \* Saviego, from her mother, Gertrudis Barrera, who [ \* 237 ] died in Matamoros, in Mexico, in 1842.

Gertrudis Barrera acquired, in 1834, one league of the *locus in quo* by donation, and the remainder by purchase under the colonization laws of the State of Coahuila and Texas, while it formed a

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part of the republic of Mexico. She occupied and improved the land until the commencement of the revolutionary movements in Texas, in 1835, but prior to the declaration of independence in that year she emigrated and became a resident of Matamoras, where she continued until her death. The plaintiffs were also citizens of Coahuila and Texas, but abandoned their connection with Texas in company with their ancestress, and have retained their *status* as Mexican citizens.

They are described on the record as aliens and citizens, and residents of the city of Matamoras, in the State of Tamaulipas, in the republic of Mexico. The defendant claimed the land by virtue of locations and surveys of valid land certificates, which had been regularly returned to the general land office, in Texas, before the 31st August, 1853.

A number of questions are presented in the bill of exceptions, but the opinion the court has formed upon the 12th, 13th, and 14th instructions, given at the instance of the plaintiffs, in the district court, renders it unnecessary for us to consider any others. These instructions are as follows :

“ 12. If Gertrudis Barrera was a citizen of the republic of Mexico, domiciliated within the State of Coahuila and Texas when the land in question was granted to her, her abandonment of the State of Coahuila and Texas, and settlement in Matamoras, in the State of Tamaulipas, after the commencement of the revolution in Texas, and before the declaration of Texan independence, was not a forfeiture of the land so granted, nor did the land thereby become vacant ; and after the close of the revolution in Texas, she would have been authorized to enforce her right, had she then been living.

“ 13. If Madame Barrera died in Tamaulipas, in 1842, then being a citizen of the said State of Tamaulipas, domiciliated there, and the female plaintiff was her only heir, she too being a citizen of, and domiciliated in Tamaulipas, said heir could and did take, by the law here, the land in contest, by descent, and had a right to enforce her title by descent, to the same extent that her ancestor could have done, but subject, as she is an alien, to forfeiture by proceedings on the part of the State.

“ 14. But if no proceedings were instituted and perfected before the late treaty between the United States and Mexico, the right in said heir becomes perfect, and not subject to forfeiture, by virtue of the 8th article of said treaty.”

[ \* 238 ]     \* It is settled, in the jurisprudence of Texas, that the colonization laws of Coahuila and Texas annex, as an endur-

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ing and peremptory condition, to all titles issued by their authority, that the grantee, so long as he remains the proprietor, shall continue his domicile within the republic of Mexico, of which that State formed a part. A change of domicile operated to defeat the estate of the grantee, and to restore the land without encumbrance to the public domain, so that, without a judicial or other inquiry, it might be regranted. The same jurisprudence recognizes the prohibition upon foreigners to inherit lands in Mexico, for the owners of lands were subject to charges and obligations which citizens could alone perform. *Halleman v. Peebles*, 1 Texas, 673; *Horton v. Brown*, 2 *ibid.* 78; *Yates v. Iams*, 10 *ibid.* 168.

The conduct of Gertrudis Barrera and her children, the defendants in this suit, after the commencement of the revolutionary movements in Texas, and which separated that State from Mexico, deprived them of all claim to political rights in the new republic, and placed them under the civil disabilities of foreigners under its laws. The constitution of Texas, of 1836, identified as citizens only such persons as were residing in Texas on the day of the declaration of independence, or should be naturalized according to its provisions. Hart. Dig. 35, 38; *Inglis v. Trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor*, 3 Pet. 99. The same instrument provided that "no alien shall hold land in Texas, except by titles emanating directly from the government of this republic," (Hart. Dig. 38, § 10,) and provided that congress should, as early as practicable, introduce by statute the common law of England, with such modifications as the circumstances of the State might require. This duty was performed in 1840, by an enactment that "the common law of England, so far as it is not inconsistent with the constitution or acts of congress now in force, shall, together with such acts, be the rule of decision in this republic, and shall continue in full force until altered or repealed by congress." The common-law authorities clearly establish that Madame Saviego, under the circumstances, is not deemed to be an heir at law, having no inheritable blood, and, in the absence of such heirs, the estate would be cast immediately upon the State, without inquest of office. *Orr v. Hodgson*, 4 Wheat. 453; *Hardy v. De Leon*, 5 Texas, 211, 242.

We shall now examine if there are other provisions in the laws of Texas to relieve the defendants from the apparent disability.

The constitution of Texas, by way of exception to the general inhibition upon aliens to "hold lands except by titles emanating directly from the republic," declares, that "if any citizen should \*die intestate or otherwise, his children or heirs [\* 239] shall inherit his estate, and aliens shall have a reason-

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able time to take possession of and dispose of the same in a manner hereafter to be pointed out by law." The 10th section of the law of distribution and descent, (Hart. Dig. art. 585,) provides: "In making title to land by descent, it shall be no bar to a party that any ancestor, through whom he derives his descent from the intestate, is or hath been an alien; and every alien to whom any land may be devised or may descend, shall have nine years to become a citizen of the republic and take possession of such land; or shall have nine years to sell the same, before it shall be declared forfeited, or before it shall escheat to the government." The first clause of this section is substantially a re-enactment of the statute of 11 and 12 William III., c. 6, and removes no other defect than the want of inheritable blood arising from the alienage of some person through whom the heir must deduce his claim. *McCreery v. Somerville*, 9 Wheat. 354.

The second clause modifies the existing laws which regulate the capacities of aliens to take or hold real property in the State, whether by devise or descent.

But the remedial effect of the act does not extend beyond the disability of an alien heir. It contains no enactment in favor of an alien who may have acquired possession or property in lands, whereby he could make a valid bequest or transmit it to his heirs, whether aliens or citizens by descent.

The act of which this section forms a part is framed for the disposal of the estates of those having "title to any estate in inheritance, and regulates its descent or distribution." The prohibition in the constitution upon aliens to hold lands in Texas, and the limited powers of congress to introduce favorable conditions in favor of alien heirs, must be remembered in ascertaining its meaning. The constitution had provided for the transmission of the estates of citizens to their children or heirs, (being citizens,) and then provides that congress shall legislate to give to aliens a reasonable time to take possession and to dispose of such an inheritance. Neither the language of the act nor the policy of the State, as it may be discovered from its constitutions and laws, authorizes the conclusion that an alien, claiming real property in Texas, can transmit it by descent, to an heir who is also an alien.

The subject-matter to which these provisions all relate is the estates of citizens; and we cannot apply their conditions to the special and peculiar case of an inheritance claimed by an alien heir in the right of an alien intestate. The question has not arisen, so far as we can discover, in the courts of Texas; but in the case



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of *Cryer v. Andrews*, 11 Texas, 170, the court seems to assume that the act we have considered was a legislative compliance with the constitutional guarantees in favor of the [ \* 240 ] alien heirs of deceased citizens; and that the alien heir must, within nine years, sell the lands or become a citizen. In the present instance, citizenship has not been acquired, which that court seems to treat as a prerequisite to an entry on the inheritance.

The last question remaining for consideration arises on the 8th section of the treaty with the republic of Mexico of the 2d February, 1848, (9 Stats. at Large, 923,) called the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The first clause of that article provides "for the Mexicans now established in territories previously belonging to Mexico, and which remain for the future within the limits of the United States." The second clause provides for those who shall prefer to remain in the said territories, and they are authorized to retain the title of Mexican citizens or acquire the rights of citizens of the United States. The third clause prescribes, "that in the said territories property of every kind, now belonging to Mexicans not established there, shall be inviolably respected. The present owners, the heirs of these, and all Mexicans who may hereafter acquire said property by contract, shall enjoy with respect to it guarantees equally ample as if the same belonged to citizens of the United States." To what territories did the high contracting parties refer to in this article? We think it clear that they did not refer to any portion of the acknowledged limits of Texas. The territories alluded to are those which had, previously to the treaty, belonged to Mexico, and which, after the treaty, should remain within the limits of the United States. The republic of Texas had been many years before acknowledged by the United States as existing separately and independently of Mexico; and as a separate and independent State it had been admitted to the Union. The government of the United States, by that act, had conferred upon the population established there all the privileges within their constitutional competency to grant.

The various stipulations contained in this article are wholly inapplicable to the persons who, before the revolution in Texas, had been citizens of Mexico, and who, by that revolution, had been separated from it.

The right of property, to which this article of the treaty was designed to afford a guarantee, extended to property of every kind which, at its date, belonging to Mexican citizens, ("now belonging to Mexicans,") not established within the territories then ceded



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to the United States. In the present instance, the republic of Texas had acquired title many years before, and the land at the date formed a part of its public domain.

Our conclusion is, that the judgment of the district court should be reversed, and the cause remanded to that court for further proceedings.

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THE UNITED STATES, Plaintiffs in Error, v. THE MINNESOTA AND  
NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY.

18 H. 241.

DISCONTINUANCE OF A WRIT OF ERROR IN THIS COURT.

This court allowed the attorney general to dismiss and discontinue a case brought here by writ of error on behalf of the United States, on his statement that the record did not present certain matters which the attorney general considered necessary to a decision of the questions intended to be raised in the case.

THE case comes from the supreme court of Minnesota Territory by writ of error, and the point is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Cushing*, for the motion.

*Mr. Barbour* and *Mr. Johnson*, opposed.

Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the supreme court of the Territory of Minnesota.

An action of trespass was brought by the United States against the defendants before the district court of the first district, in the county of Goodhue, in said Territory, for an alleged trespass committed on section 3, in township No. 112 north, of the public lands.

The defendants justified under an act of incorporation by the legislature of the said Territory, passed March 4, 1854, and by which they were empowered to construct a railroad from a point on the northwest shore of Lake Superior, and near the mouth of the St. Louis river, across the said Territory of Minnesota, by the way of St. Anthony and St. Paul, over the Mississippi at St. Paul, and to such point on the northern boundary line of the State of Iowa, as the board of directors might designate, which point should be selected with reference to the best route to the city of Dubuque, provided the location of the road should conform in all respects to such route as might be designated in any act of congress granting lands for the construction of a railroad through the Territory.

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The act of incorporation also provided that any lands granted to the Territory in aid of the construction of this road, should be deemed vested in fee-simple in the company; and further, it is alleged that by an act of congress, passed June 29, 1854, for the purpose of aiding in the construction of the road, every alternate section of land designated by odd numbers, for six sections \* in width on each side of the road along the line, [ \* 242 ] was granted to the Territory upon the terms and conditions specified in the said act; and also, that the said defendants caused a survey and location of the road as contemplated by the act of incorporation, and that said road includes the land upon which the trespass complained of was committed, and which is a portion of one of the sections granted to the Territory of Minnesota by the act of congress aforesaid.

The plaintiff to this defense set up, by way of replication, that before the trespasses complained of were committed, namely, on the 4th of August, 1854, an act was passed by congress repealing the act previously passed on the 29th of June; granting land in aid of the construction of said road.

To this replication the defendants demurred, and the plaintiff joined in the demurrer.

The district court gave judgment for the defendants on the demurrer.

An appeal was taken from this judgment to the supreme court of the Territory, where, after argument, the judgment was affirmed. From this judgment the plaintiff has appealed to this court by writ of error.

The writ of error was made returnable to this court on the fourth Monday of December, 1854, and the record was brought up by the defendants in error, and filed and docketed on the 21st of the same month.

The attorney general now moves, on behalf of the United States, to withdraw his writ of error, and discontinue the appeal to this court, which motion is resisted by the counsel for the defendants.

After an appeal brought to the appellate court, the withdrawal or discontinuance of the same is not a matter of course, but, if the plaintiff finds it expedient to discontinue, he must first obtain leave of the court. 2 Daniel's Pr. 1644; 11 Pet. 55. The discontinuance is usually granted on the application, unless some special reason be shown by the defendant for retaining the case with a view to a determination on the merits. Usually, the courts will not allow it, if the party intend at some future time to bring a new appeal, as the allowance under such circumstances would be

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unjust to the defendant. There is no such ground of objection here, as the attorney general disclaims trying the questions involved upon the present pleadings. These pleadings, with the exception of some questions arising upon the powers conferred upon the defendants under their act of incorporation, confine the issue to the effect and operation of the act of congress granting the lands in aid of the construction of the road, and of the [ \* 243 ] subsequent repealing act. And these, \*doubtless, comprised all the questions which the counsel in the court below, representing the United States, supposed could be material. They are presented very fully and lawyer-like upon the record, and are involved in the judgment rendered in the court below.

The attorney general, however, avers, that there are other questions than those appearing on the record, which he deems material to be brought to the consideration of the court in deciding upon the force and effect of these acts of congress referred to, and without which he is unwilling to submit the case to the final determination of this court; and asks, therefore, for a withdrawal of the appeal. Without expressing any opinion whether there may or may not be questions presented, other than those appearing upon this record, bearing upon the general matters involved in the litigation, the court are of opinion that the grounds stated by the attorney general, and his opinion expressed as the legal representative of the government, are sufficient to justify us in granting leave for the discontinuance.

Some technical grounds have been presented, depending upon the rules and practice of the court for the dismissal of the case from the docket, and of the writ of error, which we have not deemed it important to notice, as we think the motion should be granted upon the general ground stated.

Motion to withdraw and discontinue the appeal by writ of error in this case granted.

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JAMES L. CALCOTE, Plaintiff in Error, v. FREDERICK STANTON AND  
HENRY S. BUCKNER.

18 H. 243.

JURISDICTION OVER JUDGMENTS OF STATE COURTS.

On a bill filed in a State court, to set aside the discharge of a bankrupt, that court sustained a demurrer to the bill. Such a decree confers no jurisdiction on this court, because it does not appear that any construction of the bankrupt law was made by the court or was necessary to its judgment; and second, if any such matter was con-

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sidered, the decision was in favor of the right claimed under the bankrupt act, and not against it.

WRIT of error to the high court of errors and appeals of Mississippi. The case, as considered on the motion to dismiss, is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for the motion to dismiss.

*Mr. Day* and *Mr. Johnson*, against it.

\* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 244 ]

This case comes before us on a motion to dismiss for want of jurisdiction. It is a writ of error to the high court of errors and appeals of the State of Mississippi.

The plaintiff in error, who was complainant in a bill in equity before the chancellor of that State, claims jurisdiction for this court to review the judgment of the court of appeals, under the 25th section of the judiciary act, because the title to his demand comes through a bankrupt assignee, and therefore from an authority exercised under an act of congress, and because the judgment of the State court was against his claim. He contends that his case is within the third clause of this section, which authorizes this court to review the decision of a State court "where is drawn in question the construction of any clause of the constitution; or of a treaty or statute, or commission held under the United States, and the decision is against the title, right, privilege, or exemption specially set up or claimed," &c.

It is not enough to give jurisdiction to this court, under this clause, that the decision of the State court was against a party claiming title under some statute of, or commission held under, the United States. The origin of the title may be but an accident of the controversy, and not the subject or substance of it. The suit must have drawn in question the construction of such statute or commission, and the judgment of the State court must have been adverse to the claim set up under them. "The record also must show, if not *ipsissimis verbis*, at least, by clear and necessary intendment, that such question of 'construction' was raised, and must have been decided in order to induce the judgment. It is not enough to show that the question might have arisen, and been applicable to the case, unless it is further shown on the record that it did arise, and was applied by the State

\* court to the case." The cases which establish these [ \* 245 ] principles are too numerous for quotation.

The record before us presents no evidence that such a question did arise, or could have been decided.

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The bill shows that, twelve years after the defendants were discharged under the bankrupt act, the complainant got an assignment of certain claims against them from creditors who had received their dividends of the bankrupt's assets, without questioning the legality of their discharge; that being thus possessed, he set about "to ferret out the frauds, devices, combinations, priorities, preferences, &c., &c., practised, done, and given by the defendants;" and that he had discovered numerous instances of preferences given by the defendants to indorsers and other favored creditors previous to their bankruptcy, in consequence of which it was alleged that their certificate of discharge was void. The balances claimed under these assignments, with interest, would amount to near a million of dollars. The averment of the bill, that the assignments to the complainant were for "value received," would be satisfied by the consideration of a dollar or less. The respondents demurred to the bill, and set forth numerous causes of demurrer; the chief of which were a want of equity in the bill, and the bar of the statute of limitations, or the staleness of the demand. But in no one of them is any objection interposed which called for a construction of the bankrupt act, where the complainant claimed any title or exemption under it. The only "privilege or exemption" which could have been "drawn in question" under the act were those of the defendant, the validity of whose discharge under it was impugned. But as the decision was in their favor, the case is not brought within our jurisdiction. See *Strader v. Baldwin*, 9 How. 261.

The whole argument for plaintiff in error was expended in endeavoring to prove that the bill ought not to have been dismissed for want of equity or staleness; and, assuming this to be so, it was contended that the court could not have done so for these reasons, and consequently their decision must have been the result of some misconstruction of the bankrupt law as to the rights claimed by the complainant under it. But, as we have already shown, if the plaintiffs could successfully establish both their premises and conclusion it would not avail to give us jurisdiction. And we may add, moreover, that we see no reason, from anything that appears on this record, why the State court might not have dismissed the bill as devoid of equity, and as exhibiting a claim which, if not champertous, is on its face a litigious speculation in stale, abandoned, and, as to much the larger portion, wholly unfounded demands.

The writ of error is therefore dismissed for want of jurisdiction.

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York and Cumberland R. R. Co. v. Myers.

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THE YORK AND CUMBERLAND RAILROAD COMPANY, Plaintiffs in Error,  
v. JOHN G. MYERS.

18 H. 246.

AWARD—GOOD ONLY FOR WHAT IS SUBMITTED.

1. An award of an arbitrator is good only for what is submitted to him; and if he mingles in a single conclusion, so that it cannot be separated, what was submitted and what was not, the whole is bad.
2. The bill of exceptions in this case, giving the testimony of the arbitrator, shows that his entire award was within the submission, which was of all matters embraced in the declaration.
3. The facts being thus presented to this court by the bill of exceptions, it can examine to see if the court ruled correctly on the validity of the award; and it being found to be within the submission, the court cannot set it aside for mistake either of law or fact.
4. There is no error in the court having permitted a copy of the original writ to be filed, the original having been lost after it had served its purpose by bringing the defendants into court. *Burchell v. Marsh*, 17 How. 344.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Maine, and the case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Clifford* and *Mr. Shepley*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. F. O. J. Smith*, for defendant.

\*Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 248 ]

This is an action by the defendant in this court (Myers) against the railroad company, for the breach of the covenants in a contract made between these parties in August, 1850, by which the defendant agreed to perform certain work, incur charges and expenses, and supply equipments and materials in the construction of a railroad from the city of Portland, in Maine, to South Berwick, in New Hampshire; and also to fulfill the unexecuted engagements of certain contractors who had retired before completing their contract. Before the terms of the contract had been accomplished, the defendant was dismissed, as he alleges, without a sufficient cause; and the object of the suit is to recover such damages as he had sustained by the failure of the company to discharge the obligations they had assumed to him. The declaration recites at large the agreements of the parties, and contains a general averment that he entered upon the construction of the railroad, and the performance of all the matters and things upon his part to be done and performed, and had performed all the things required to be done and performed, until the 19th of August, 1852, and had nearly



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completed one of the sections of the road so as to be fit for use, and that it had been used ; also, that he had expended large sums towards the engineering, surveys, construction, and grading of other parts of the road, until he was unlawfully dismissed, and hindered, and forbidden to prosecute the work any further.

The declaration then contains a general averment of the non-performance by the plaintiffs (railroad company) of their obligations to suffer the work to proceed, to abide the decision of their engineer, or to pay the amounts that had become payable prior to his dismissal.

This averment is material, in connection with other parts of the case, and will be extracted hereafter.

The defendant (Myers) proceeds to take up the various stipulations of the railroad company, to describe their legal effect, and to denounce their breach by the company. None of these are of importance to the case here, save those that arise on the 8th and 9th articles of the contract. The first of these articles provides for the payments to be made on account of the first division of the road ; and the other, for those on the three remaining sections into which it was divided. The 8th article provides that the corporation should pay to the defendant for the performance of his undertakings, and in full satisfaction of the obligations of the company on the prior contracts, \$32,000 per mile for the first division of the work ; that for all work done by the previous contractors, to the

1st of August, 1850, payments should be made according [ \* 249 ] to their contracts, inclusive of the \* reserve fund ; for all lands purchased by them, whether for cash, bonds, or stock, payments should be made in cash, bonds, or stock, according to the mode of the purchase ; and for all such work on said first division, from the 1st of August, and as the same should progress, current payment should be made at the rate of fifty per cent. in cash, twenty-five per cent. in the six per cent. bonds of the company, and twenty-five per cent. in stock ; one half of the latter to be reserved for an indemnity for the fulfillment of the contract, until said division of the road should be completed.

The 9th section of the agreement refers to the second, third, and fourth sections of the road. For the fulfillment of all its obligations, the company agreed to pay \$27,500 per mile—thirty-three and one third per cent. in cash, on the return and adjustment of each monthly estimate by the engineer ; a like sum in the bonds of the company ; and a like sum, reserving one half thereof for indemnity, in the stock certificates of the company. “The monthly estimates to be governed by the same gradation of actual expendi-

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tures as heretofore, and the payment to be made on such estimate of actual expenditures.”

And it was provided that, upon the completion of either of the second, third, or fourth sections, in work, material, station-houses, and equipments, the whole of the payments of cash, bonds, and certificates of stock, in corresponding amounts, equal to the sum aforesaid, should be made in complete discharge of said company upon all the contracts pertaining to that section of the road. The breaches laid in the declaration, applicable to the payments, are as follows:

“And the said plaintiff in fact saith, that the said defendants, contrary to the covenants or agreements in the indenture aforesaid, did not abide by the decision of their engineer, as to the amount and quantity of the several kinds of work done, in and by said indenture contracted to be done by said plaintiff for said defendants, and which were done and performed by the plaintiff; nor did said defendants pay said plaintiff for the work done by him for them, according to said agreement; but, on the contrary, utterly refused to pay the plaintiff therefor, according to the estimate of their engineer; although the plaintiff avers that said engineer made to said defendants a return of the monthly estimates of the work and labor done by plaintiff upon said road.”

The declaration recites the eighth article, and avers a breach in reference to the payments, as follows: “And the plaintiff avers that said defendants, in breach of their covenant aforesaid, did not, for all the work performed and material furnished up to said first of August, make a full settlement, as had been here-  
\* tofore estimated, monthly, and pay the plaintiff therefor, [ \* 250 ] in accordance with the covenants aforesaid; neither did said defendants, for all work on said division, as the same progressed, after said first of August, according to their covenants aforesaid, pay therefor fifty per cent. in cash, twenty-five per cent. in bonds, and twenty-five per cent. in stock, one half being retained, as stipulated, for an indemnity; nor did said defendants pay the plaintiffs therefor, according to the monthly estimates of the engineer, as returned by him.”

The breach of the covenants contained in the ninth article is averred in language similar to the above, with variances corresponding to the difference of the sums to be paid.

Before a trial, the parties agreed to refer the action to the determination of three persons, to be appointed by the court, whose report, or the report of any two, was to be made as soon as may be; and that judgment thereon was to be final, and execution to issue accordingly.

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Afterwards, one of the persons appointed was authorized to act alone, and this person returned a decision in favor of the defendant, (Myers,) for an ascertained sum as damages.

Upon the return of the award to the court, the corporation submitted objections, and examined the arbitrator in support of them. These objections are as follows:

“1. That the said Hale has acted and awarded upon, and included in said award, damages for a subject-matter not referred to him.

“2. That the said Hale has included in his said award damages for a claim not embraced in the plaintiff's writ and declaration, and not sued for in the above action, and not referred to his arbitration or decision.

“3. That, in and by his said award, he has awarded to the plaintiff in said action damages for the non-delivery of the reserved stock specified in said writ and declaration, and in the contracts therein set out and copied, although the said reserved stock is not sued for, nor is any allegation made in the said writ and declaration that the same had been demanded, nor was any proof of demand of the same offered at the hearing before said referee, nor was any claim for the same referred for his arbitration or decision.

“4. That the said Hale has awarded damages to the said plaintiff, in lieu of profits for work not performed by the plaintiff under his said contracts, contrary to law.

“5. That there having been no proof or claim that the defendants, in fraud of the plaintiff's rights under his said contract, had taken the contract from the plaintiff, and given to any other person at a lower rate, or taken it for the purpose of [ \* 251 ] giving it to \* any other party at a lower rate, the referee has awarded a sum as damages to the plaintiff for prospective profits not earned by him, contrary to law.

“6. That it does not appear in and by said award whether the said referee has credited or charged the plaintiff with an amount of bonds deposited in the hands of Levi Morrell, under the terms of the supplementary contract, dated February 6, 1851, and set out in said writ and declaration.

“7. That it does not appear in and by said award what disposition was made by the referee of an amount of bonds in the hands of D. C. Emery, the treasurer of said corporation.

“8. That it does not appear in and by said award whether the said referee charged the said plaintiff with an amount of bonds in his hands, purporting to have been issued by one Nathaniel J.

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Herrick, describing himself as treasurer *pro tempore* of said corporation."

The arbitrator testified that he had included the twelve and one half per cent. of reserved stock in the award; that he considered the demand for reserved stock as suspended by the proceeding, and that the plaintiff (Myers) was entitled to damages for not having received the stock previous to the breach of the contract. He says there was no distinct claim made before the referee for the reserved stock, but the account embraced it by way of debtor and creditor. The books showed he was entitled to reserved stock, but not as subject to his order, or that he had any opportunity to receive it. He said it was admitted that that amount of reserved stock would be due to him on settlement of his account, but not that he had at any time had it under his control, nor was there any evidence that he had demanded it.

This testimony, with more to the same effect, was elicited from the arbitrator upon his examination before the circuit court, upon the return of the award, and in support of the exceptions to it. The learned judge who presided received the evidence, but overruled the exceptions, and embodied the testimony and the decision in a bill of exceptions, reserving his opinion of the regularity of that mode of proceeding, and whether the judgment can be revised. We are of the opinion, that the equity of the statute allowing a bill of exceptions in courts of common law of original jurisdiction, embraces all such judgments or opinions of the court that arise in the course of a cause, which are the subjects of revision by an appellate court, and which do not otherwise appear on the record. *Strother v. Hutchinson*, 4 Bing. N. C. 83; *Ford v. Potts*, 1 Halst. 388; *Nesbitt v. Dallam*, 7 G. & J. 494; 9 Port. 136.

But to present a question to this court, the subordinate \*tribunal must ascertain the facts upon which the judg- [ \* 252 ] ment, or opinion excepted to, is founded; for this court cannot determine the weight or effect of evidence, nor decide mixed questions of law and fact. *Zeller v. Eckert*, 4 How. 289.

The practice prevails in the courts, where rules of reference are in use, to examine the arbitrators as witnesses, to ascertain facts material to the validity of the award; and the appellate courts are accustomed to revise their decisions, and upon principle we see no objection to the introduction of the same practice into the courts of the United States under the limitations we have indicated. *Thornton v. Carson*, 7 Cranch, 597; *Butler v. Mayor of N. Y.*, 7 Hill, 329; *Lutz v. Linthicum*, 8 Peters, 166; *Sawyer v. Freeman*, 35 Maine, 546; *Ward v. American Bank*, 7 Met. 486.

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In the present instance we can collect from the evidence of the referee, as shown in the exceptions, the fact necessary to raise some of the questions contained in the objections to the award, without being involved in the dispute between the parties, as to the condition in which the reserved stock had been placed by the corporation.

The law is well settled, that by the reference of an action to the determination of an arbitrator, nothing is included in the submission but the subject-matter involved in it. Tidd's Pr. 822; 2 T. R. 645.

And if an arbitrator embraces in his award matter not submitted, and includes the result in a single conclusion, so as to render it impossible to separate the matters referred from those which have not been, the award is bad. *Lyle v. Rodgers*, 5 Wheat. 394; 33 Maine, 219; *Sawyer v. Freeman*, 35 Maine, 546.

The defendant contends that no claim for the reserved stock, or for damages for its non-delivery, was embraced in the declaration or sued for in the action; and, as the reference was one of the action merely, no such claim was submitted to the referee. This involves the construction of the declaration.

We have extracted the averments in the declaration that were designed to charge the corporation with the non-performance of the covenants, for the payment for work done before the dismissal of the contractor.

In one of those the charge is, that the corporation had neglected and refused to make any payments, and thus a total failure to fulfill its obligations in respect to payments is alleged. The assignments of the breaches of the 8th and 9th articles are made in the language of the covenants themselves, and the failure charged is coextensive with the obligations. If the corporation had created no reserved stock, or had made no appropriation [ \* 253 ] for the contractor, according to the monthly estimates as the work progressed, and had finally dismissed him, so as to exclude his claim for the stock reserved when his contract had been fulfilled, there could have been no ground for affirming that a breach of the covenants had not been made by the corporation, and that damages were not due.

There would have been no argument to support the allegation, that the contractor was a corporator to the extent of the stock which should have been reserved. But, as we interpret the declaration, its averments have this scope and operation.

It was the duty of the arbitrator to ascertain the truth of these charges. They were the precise subject of the reference. The

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arbitrator has explained with clearness in his testimony his conclusion on the subject of this stock, that the contractor had no title to the shares; that is, that he had not been paid by the appropriation of so much reserved stock for his use. This conclusion of his is a final decision on the question, for this court cannot revise his mistakes, either of law or of fact, if such had been established. *Burchell v. Marsh*, 17 How. 344; *Kleine v. Catara*, 2 Gall. 61. The objections, we have noticed, include all that were insisted on in the argument.

The objection taken to the absence of an original writ, or to the supply of a copy, is not tenable. The original writ had fulfilled its function when the defendant had been brought into court, and its loss did not affect the action of the plaintiff; and, it was a matter resting in the discretion of the court, upon ascertaining the defective state of the record, to supply the deficiency.

Our conclusion is, there is no error in the record.

Judgment affirmed.

Mr. Justice DANIEL dissented.

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JOHN G. SHIELDS, Appellant, v. ISAAC THOMAS and others.

18 H. 253.

ENFORCING DECREE IN EQUITY OF A FOREIGN COURT.

1. Where a party not within the jurisdiction of a court is proceeded against by publication or warning order under statutory provision, if he enters his appearance and defends, he is as much bound by the decree as if served with process within the jurisdiction.
2. A bill in equity which seeks to enforce a decree of another court in favor of several distributees of an estate against a party liable for assets received, is not multifarious because the plaintiffs have, in the decree sued on, had several sums decreed to them as distributees of the estate. In such case they claim through a common title, and defendant is liable on one transaction, though to several persons.
3. A bill in chancery is an appropriate mode of obtaining the benefit of a decree in chancery in a foreign court, though an action at law might be sustained for the sum awarded by the first decree.

APPEAL from the district court for the district of Iowa.

The case is very fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Gillett*, for appellant.

*Mr. Platt Smith*, for appellees



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[ \* 255 ] \* Mr. Justice DANIEL delivered the opinion of the court.

Upon an appeal from a decree in chancery by the district court of the northern district of Iowa.

This case, although upon the record a good deal extended in volume, is in effect narrowed to the questions of law arising upon the pleadings.

The facts of the case, so far as a statement of these is necessary to an accurate comprehension of the legal questions discussed and decided, were as follows: In the year 1839, a portion of the appellees, as heirs and distributees of John Goldsbury, by their bill filed in the circuit court for Grayson county, in the State of Kentucky, alleged that their ancestor died in Nelson county, in the State aforesaid, intestate, leaving a widow, Eleanor Goldsbury, and four children—three daughters, Elizabeth, Nancy, and Mary, and one son, Bennett Goldsbury—all these children infants at the time of their father's death. That John Goldsbury died possessed of one male and one female slave, and of other personal property,

and perfectly free from debt. That the widow Eleanor [ \* 256 ] Goldsbury, who was appointed \* the administratrix of her husband, and as such took possession of the estate within a year from the period of his death, intermarried with one James Shields, in conjunction with whom she had continued to hold the entire estate, and to apply it to their exclusive use, without having made any settlement or distribution thereof. The bill further charged, that Shields and wife, after enjoying the services and hires of the male slave for several years, had ultimately sold him, and that, in the year 1818, they removed from Kentucky to the State of Missouri, carrying with them the female slave belonging to the estate of John Goldsbury, together with her descendants, seven in number, and of great value; that upon application to said Shields and wife, for a surrender of those slaves, and for an account of the estate of John Goldsbury, so possessed and used by them, this request was refused, and that, by a fraudulent confederacy between Shields and wife, and John G. Shields, their son, and Henry Yates, their son-in-law, the slaves had by the son and son-in-law been secreted, carried off and sold, in parts unknown to the complainants, and the other personal estate of John Goldsbury fraudulently disposed of in like manner. The bill also made defendants the representatives of the surety of Eleanor Goldsbury, in her bond given as administratrix of her first husband. The bill also made defendants though not in an adversary interest, Isaac Thomas, and Mary, his wife, Elizabeth, John and Ann Goldsbury, which said Elizabeth, John, and Ann, are the

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infant children of Bennett Goldsbury, son of John Goldsbury, deceased.

After the filing of the bill in this case, it appearing to the satisfaction of the court that James Shields, and Eleanor, his wife, Elizabeth, John, and Ann Goldsbury, John Shields, and Henry Yates, were not inhabitants of the State of Kentucky, there was, on the 25th of December, 1839, under the authority of the statute of Kentucky with reference to absent defendants, issued by the court what is termed a warning order, by which the absent defendants were required to appear at the next April term of the court, and answer the complainants' bill.

Afterwards, namely, on the 28th of April, 1840, the absent defendants still not appearing, under the like authority of the law of the State, the clerk of the court, by its order, filed on behalf of those defendants a traverse denying the allegations of the complainants' bill.

Subsequently to this proceeding, namely, on the 30th of October, 1841, the said John G. Shields filed his answer to the complainants' bill, thereby recognizing as to himself personally the jurisdiction of the court.

Upon these pleadings, the cause after an examination of \* witnesses, and upon a report of the master, came to [ \* 257 ] a hearing before the circuit court, and this tribunal decreed against the representative of the surety in the administration bond of Mrs. Goldsbury, (afterwards Mrs. Shields,) and against James Shields, her husband, she having departed this life, John G. Shields, the son, and Henry Yates, the son-in-law, in favor of the heirs and distributees of John Goldsbury, the portions reported to be due to them respectively of the general effects of John Goldsbury, deceased, and of the values and hires of the slaves. Upon an appeal taken from this decree to the supreme court of Kentucky, it being the opinion of the latter that, under the circumstances, the surety in the administration bond should not be charged, and also that an amount equal to the price of the slave Mat, sold by the administratrix and her husband, and to the hires of the remaining slaves, had been properly applied to the dower of the widow and to the use of the heirs of John Goldsbury, it ordered the decree of the circuit court to be reformed in conformity with the opinion of the supreme court. By a final decree of the circuit court of Grayson county, made on the 28th day of October, 1846, the bill as to the representative of the surety in the administration bond was dismissed, and the defendants, James Shields, John G. Shields, and Henry Yates, and each of them,

who had, by fraudulent combination, secreted and carried off, and disposed of the descendants of the female slave, originally the property of John Goldsbury, were decreed and ordered to pay to the heirs of said John Goldsbury severally, the amounts ascertained to be due to them as their respective and separate portions of the value of the slaves thus fraudulently disposed of, without any allowance for the hires of those slaves.

To obtain the benefit of this last decree, the suit now before us was instituted in the names of the appellees, Isaac Thomas and Mary, his wife, Uriah Pirtle and Nancy, his wife, citizens of the State of Kentucky, and John B. Goldsbury, a citizen of the State of Missouri, the said Mary Thomas, and Nancy Pirtle, and John B. Goldsbury, being heirs and distributees of John Goldsbury, deceased, against John G. Shields, a citizen of the State of Iowa. The bill refers to the proceedings in the Kentucky suit, which proceedings are set forth *in extenso* as an exhibit in this cause; it further assigns as a reason for the non-joinder of a portion of the heirs of John Goldsbury as defendants, the fact that their residence precluded as to them the jurisdiction of the district court of Iowa. It sets out the sums of money severally and specifically decreed to the complainants by the circuit court of Grayson county, Kentucky, and prays that the defendant, John G. Shields, [ \* 258 ] may be compelled to perform that decree by \* the payment to the complainants respectively the sums so awarded them, and concludes with a prayer for general relief.

By an amendment to the original bills in this case, the several heirs and distributees of John Goldsbury, residing in the State of Missouri, beyond the jurisdiction of the district court of Iowa, and who, for that reason, were not made defendants by the original bill, were admitted as complainants in this suit, and united in the prayer for enforcing the decree in their favor, as rendered by the circuit court of Grayson county, Kentucky.

To the original and amended bill in this case, the defendant, John G. Shields, interposed a demurrer, which having been overruled, and the demurrant abiding by his demurrer, and declining to answer over, the district court for the district of Iowa, on the 17th day of January, 1854, adjudged and decreed to the complainants the sums respectively awarded to them by the circuit court of Grayson county, Kentucky, as against the defendant, John G. Shields, with interest upon those several sums from the 28th day of October, 1846, the date of the decree in the circuit court.

Upon an appeal from the district court of Iowa, several points arising upon the demurrer, and discussed and adjudged by that

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court, are presented for consideration here. Amongst the objections insisted upon, that which stands first in the natural order, is the alleged want of jurisdiction in the circuit court of Kentucky, either over the subject-matter or the parties embraced in the proceedings of that court.

In this objection no force is perceived. The subject-matter of the suit was the settlement of the estate of an intestate who lived and died within the limits of the court's authority, within which limits the qualification of the administratrix of the intestate, the appraisement of his estate, and the recording of that appraisement had taken place; within which also was the residence of the surety in the administration bond, and of a portion of the distributees—both plaintiffs and defendants asserting before that court their interest in the estate. The court, as one vested with general equity powers, could act either *in personam* or *in rem*, as to persons or property within the State.

Under the laws and the practice in the State of Kentucky, already referred to, proceedings are authorized and prescribed in suits in equity against absent defendants; which proceedings, when regularly observed, are held within the State to be binding absolutely. With respect to absent defendants, such proceedings could be considered as binding beyond the limits of the State in instances only in which those defendants should have been legally and personally served with process, or in which they

\* should have voluntarily submitted themselves as parties. [ \* 259 ] In the suit in the State court, the subject-matter of the controversy, as well as a portion of the parties, both plaintiffs and defendants, being confessedly within its cognizance, no ground for exception to the jurisdiction could exist as to these. The defendant, John G. Shields, when he voluntarily entered his appearance, and answered the bill, placed himself in the same predicament with the other parties regularly before the court, and could not afterwards except to the jurisdiction upon the ground of his non-residence. The decree, therefore, so far as this exception is designed to affect it, cannot be impeached.

The objection which seems to follow next in order, is one leveled at the frame of the bill in the district court of the United States, irrespective of the justice or regularity of the proceedings in the State court. This objection is, that the bill filed in the district court of Iowa is multifarious, by embracing in one suit interests and causes of action in themselves separate and disconnected, and therefore such as it was improper to include in one bill.

There is, perhaps, no rule established for the conducting of

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equity pleadings, with reference to which (whilst as a rule it is universally admitted) there has existed less of certainty and uniformity in application, than has attended this relating to multifariousness. This effect, flowing, perhaps inevitably, from the variety of modes and degrees of right and interest entering into the transactions of life, seems to have led to a conclusion rendering the rule almost as much an exception as a rule, and that conclusion is, that each case must be determined by its peculiar features. Thus Daniel, in his work on Chancery Practice, vol. 1, p. 384, quoting from Lord Cottenham, says: "It is impossible, upon the authorities, to lay down any rule or abstract proposition, as to what constitutes multifariousness, which can be made universally applicable. The cases upon the subject are extremely various, and the court, in deciding upon them, seems to have considered what was convenient in particular cases, rather than to have attempted to lay down an absolute rule. The only way of reconciling the authorities upon the subject is, by adverting to the fact that, although the books speak generally of demurrers for multifariousness, yet in truth such demurrers may be divided into two distinct kinds. Frequently, the objection raised, though termed multifariousness, is in fact more properly misjoinder; that is to say, the cases or claims united in the bill are of so different a character that the court will not permit them to be litigated in one record. But what is more familiarly understood by the term multifariousness, as applied to a bill, is, where a party is able to say, he [ \* 260 ] is brought as a \* defendant upon a record, with a large portion of which, and of the case made by which, he has no connection whatever."

Justice Story, in his compilation upon equity pleading, defines multifariousness in a bill to mean, "the improperly joining in one bill distinct and independent matters, and thereby confounding them." And the example by which he illustrates his definition is thus given: "The uniting in one bill several matters perfectly distinct and unconnected against one defendant, or the demand of several matters of a distinct and independent nature, against several defendants in the same bill." Sir Thomas Plumer, V. C., in allowing a demurrer which had been interposed by one of several defendants to a bill on the ground that it was multifarious, remarks, that "the court is always averse to multiplicity of suits, but certainly a defendant has the right to insist that he is not bound to answer a bill containing several distinct and separate matters relating to individuals with whom he has no connection." *Brooks v. Lord Whitworth*, 1 Mad. Ch. R. 57.

Justice Story closes his review of the authorities upon this defect in a bill, with the following remark: "The conclusion to which a close survey of all the authorities will conduct us, seems to be, that there is not any positive inflexible rule as to what, in the sense of a court of equity, constitutes multifariousness, which is fatal to a suit on demurrer." To bring the present case to the standard of the principles above stated, the appellees are seeking a subject their title to which is common to them all, founded in the relation they bear to a common ancestor. The different portions or shares into which the subject may be divisible amongst themselves, can have no effect upon the nature or character of their title derived as above mentioned; and which in its character is an unit, and cannot be objected to for inconsistency or diversity of any kind. They seek an account and the recovery of a subject claimed by their common title, or an equivalent for that subject, against persons charged with having by fraudulent combination withheld and diverted that subject, and who, by such combination and diversion, rendered themselves equally, jointly, and severally liable therefor. Upon the face of this statement it would be consistent neither with justice nor convenience, nor consistent with the practice, to turn the appellees round to an action or actions at law, for any aliquot parts of each upon a division of this subject claimed under their common title, and which aliquot portions would have to be ascertained by an account which would not depend upon the question of liability of the defendants. The like principles and considerations would, in every case of equal responsibility in several persons, instead of condemning, commend, and in a court of equity would command, wherever practicable, a common proceeding against all to whom such responsibility extended.

\* But in truth, the question raised upon this point on [ \* 261 ] the demurrer, seems to have been virtually, if not directly concluded by this court upon this very record. At the December term, 1854, of this court, a motion was made by a portion of the appellees to dismiss this appeal upon the following grounds: In the decree in favor of the distributees in Kentucky, the court having designated the shares of the whole amount recovered, which would belong to each distributee, and the district court of Iowa having adopted the same rate of distribution in enforcing the decree of the Kentucky court, by which rate it appeared that none of the distributable portions amounted to the sum of \$2,000; those distributees, with the view, no doubt, of hastening the termination of this controversy, and of obtaining immediately the benefit of the decree in



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their favor, moved this court for a dismissal of this cause, upon the ground that the sum in controversy between the appellant and the persons submitting that motion was less than \$2,000, and, therefore, insufficient to give this court jurisdiction. The chief justice, in the opinion denying the motion to dismiss, uses this language: "The whole amount recovered against Shields in the proceeding in Iowa exceeds \$2,000, but the sum allotted to each representative who joined in the bill was less; and the motion is made to dismiss, upon the ground that the sum due to each complainant is severally and specifically decreed to him; and that the amount thus decreed is the sum in controversy between each representative and the appellant, and not the whole amount for which he has been held liable. But the court think the matter in controversy in the Kentucky court was the sum due to the representatives of the deceased collectively, and not the particular sum to which each was entitled when the amount due was distributed among them according to the laws of the State. They all claimed under one and the same title. They had a common and undivided interest in the claim; and it was perfectly immaterial to the appellant how it was divided among them. He had no controversy with either of them on this point, and if there was any difficulty as to the proportions in which they were to share, the dispute was among themselves, and not with him." *Vide* 17 How. pp. 4, 5. This reasoning appears to be conclusive against the defect of multifariousness imputed to the claim of the appellees in this case; and we deem it equally so with respect to defendants sustaining an equal responsibility deducible from one and the same source.

The remaining objection arising upon the demurrer, which we deem it necessary to consider, is that urged against the right of the appellees to institute proceedings in equity in the State of Iowa, to enforce the decree rendered in their favor by the court [ \* 262 ] \* in Kentucky. We can perceive no force in the effort to sustain this objection by citation of the 7th amendment of the constitution of the United States, which provides, "that in suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved." This provision, correctly interpreted, cannot be made to embrace the established, exclusive jurisdiction of courts of equity, nor that which they have exercised as concurrent with courts of law; but should be understood as limited to rights and remedies peculiarly legal in their nature, and such as it was proper to assert in courts of law, and by the appropriate modes and proceedings of courts of law.

With respect to the character and effects of decrees in chancery, although they now rank in dignity upon an equality with judgments at law, it is well known that they were once regarded as not being matters of record; and that the final process incident to judgments at law was unknown to and not permitted in courts of equity; that where such process has been permitted to them, it has been the result of statutory enactments. But the extension to a court of equity of the power to avail itself of common-law process, cannot be regarded as implying any abridgment of the original constitutional powers or practice of the former; but as cumulative and ancillary, or as leaving those powers and that practice as they formerly existed, except as they should have been expressly restricted. Amongst the original and undoubted powers of a court of equity is that of entertaining a bill filed for enforcing and carrying into effect a decree of the same, or of a different court, as the exigencies of the case, or the interests of the parties may require. *Vide* Story's Equity Pleading, §§ 429, 430, 431, upon the authority of Mitford, Eq. Pl. 95, and of Cooper's Eq. Pl. 98, 99.

In the present case the appellees were, by the residence of the appellant in a different State, cut off from the benefit of final process upon the decree of the State court, which process would not run beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the State. They were left, therefore, to the alternative of instituting either an action or actions at law upon the decree in their favor, or of filing a bill for enforcing and carrying into effect that decree. Upon the former mode of proceeding, they would have been compelled to encounter circuitry, and most probably the technical exceptions urged in argument here, founded upon the nature of the decree with respect to its unity or divisibility. The appellees have elected, as the remedy most beneficial for them, and as we think they had the right to do, the proceeding by bill in equity, to carry into execution the decree of the State court. We can perceive no just exception to the jurisdiction of the \* district court of Iowa in entertain- [ \* 263 ] ing the bill of the appellants, nor to the measure of relief decreed, nor with respect to the party against whom that relief has been granted. We therefore order that the decree of the district court of Iowa be affirmed.

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Orton v. Smith.

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## JOHN J. ORTON, Appellant, v. GEORGE SMITH.

18 H. 263.

## CONCURRENT JURISDICTION—WHEN ITS EXERCISE REFUSED BY FEDERAL COURTS.

1. The courts of the United States should not entertain jurisdiction of a bill to quiet title, when the effect of its decree must be to bring it in collision with that of a State court having prior jurisdiction of the same matter.
2. This objection is not removed by adding to the decree a reservation of the rights of the parties in the former suit, when those rights must be in inevitable conflict with the decree of the federal court.
3. Nor should any court decree on a bill to quiet title in favor of a party who has voluntarily purchased at a nominal sum the legal title, which he knew was in litigation in another court, from one of the parties to that suit.

THIS was an appeal from the district court for the district of Wisconsin, and the case is very fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Gillett and Mr. Lynde*, for appellant.

*Mr. Brown and Mr. Upham*, for defendant.

Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

The bill, in this case, is in the nature of a "bill of peace," as authorized by the statutes of Wisconsin. Smith, the claimant below, claimed to be owner of certain lands, to which Orton claimed also to have some title. The bill prays an injunction against Orton, to prohibit him from setting up his claim, and thereby "casting a cloud" over the good legal title of complainant.

The facts of the case are somewhat complex, and its merits will be better apprehended by a succinct history of them, as elicited from the pleadings and evidence.

Hubbard had settled in Wisconsin, having escaped from his creditors, with some pecuniary means, which he thought it prudent to conceal. Hence, though he speculated in the purchase and sale of lands, the title to them was held by friends. He had contracted to sell certain lots in Milwaukee to Schram.

[ \* 264 ] \*But Schram would not pay his money without a good legal title, or good security that it should be conveyed to him. Hubbard resided in the family of his friend Butler, and being addicted to idleness and intemperance, he confided the management of his affairs, in a great measure, to Butler. Schram would not pay his money on the security of Butler or the promise of Hubbard to obtain a title; and one Knab at length was prevailed on to enter into a bond with Butler, conditioned that a good legal title should be made to Schram for the lots. But Knab was

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unwilling to enter into this bond without security also. For this purpose the land in dispute in this suit was conveyed to him in fee by one Cyrus D. Davis, who held the legal title as friend and trustee of Hubbard. This deed was put on record by Knab, who, at the same time, gave his title bond covenanting to convey the land to Butler, when the covenants of their bond to Schram would be satisfied or released. This title bond was not given to Davis, because he claimed no beneficial interest in the land; nor to Hubbard, because his policy required him not to appear to have any title to property; but to Butler, the friend and active agent of Hubbard. Notwithstanding the testimony of Butler, that he paid Hubbard for the land, and did not hold as secret trustee for him, the fact may be considered doubtful; and it is not necessary to decide it, in our view of the present case. Hubbard is now deceased: but in his lifetime he assigned, for the consideration of one dollar, all his interest in the land in dispute to one Gruenhagen, (under whom Smith, the complainant, claims,) by deed dated in June, 1851.

On the 22d of February, 1851, Butler assigned to Orton, the defendant, the title bond of Knab for the consideration of \$2,100. This consideration has been paid without any knowledge or notice of any secret equity in Hubbard; and the covenants of the bond to Schram being fulfilled or released, Orton filed his bill in chancery on the 6th of August, 1851, against Knab, demanding from him a conveyance of the legal title according to the exigency of his bond.

During the pendency of this bill, which would settle the legal and equitable rights of all persons having any claim to the land in dispute, the complainant, Smith, becomes the purchaser of the real or supposed secret equity of Hubbard. And not only so, but he has obtained from Knab the transfer of the legal title for a nominal consideration; thereby substituting himself in the place of Knab in the contest pending in the State court. The charge of fraud made in the bill, because Knab's title bond was made to Butler and not to Hubbard, is not substantiated. It was a matter of indifference to Knab whether Hubbard or \*Butler held [ \* 265 ] the bond. He had no concern with the private arrangements or secret trusts between them. When the condition of his bond to Schram was released, Knab was bound to convey to Butler, by the exigency of his own contract, and could not make himself a judge of the equities between Butler and Hubbard. His assignment to Smith, under the circumstances, could have no effect but to substitute Smith in his own place, under the same liabilities.

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On this state of the facts the court below decreed the title to the land to be in Smith.

“And further, that the said defendant, John J. Orton, be, and hereby is, perpetually enjoined and forever barred from setting up or asserting any claim in or right to said premises, by virtue of or upon said bond and assignment. But this injunction and decree are not in any way to affect or operate against him, the said John J. Orton, in the prosecution of a bill pending in the circuit court of Milwaukie county, in this State, wherein he is complainant, and David Knab is defendant; this court not intending to enjoin a proceeding in the State court.”

We think the court erred in entering such a decree. Those only who have a clear, legal, and equitable title to land connected with possession, have any right to claim the interference of a court of equity to give them peace or dissipate a cloud on the title.

The complainant in this case is the volunteer purchaser of a litigious claim; he is the assignee of a secret equity for apparently a mere nominal consideration, and of the bare legal title for a like consideration. This legal title was improperly assigned to him, during the pendency of a suit in chancery to ascertain the person justly entitled to it.

Besides, the decree in this case demonstrates the impropriety of the interference of the court of the United States, and of its entertaining jurisdiction of a question of title then pending in the State court. It is true, if this were an ejectment in a court of law, the pendency of another ejectment between the same parties might not have afforded sufficient ground for a plea of *auter action pendent*; nor would the court have been bound, even by comity, to await the decision of the State court, or suffer the cause pending before them to be in any way affected by it. But a decree of a court of chancery, on a bill of peace, must necessarily operate by way of estoppel, as to the title of the land, and conclude all the parties to it, because it should put an end to all litigation between them. If they have suits pending in other courts, on the same question of title, they must cease. This bill acts by injunction on the party—

no injunction ever goes to the court having a concurrent  
[ \* 266 ] jurisdiction \* of the question. The courts of the United

States have no such power over suitors in a State court. But a decree on a bill of peace which does not put an end to litigation is a mere *brutum fulmen*. Unless the court can make a decree which it can execute, it is a sufficient reason for refusing to take cognizance of the case. It is a rule absolutely necessary to be observed by courts who have a concurrent jurisdiction, that in all

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cases “where the jurisdiction of a court and the right of a plaintiff to prosecute his suit in it have once attached, that right cannot be arrested or taken away by proceedings in another court.” This rule, it is said, “has its foundation not merely in comity, but in necessity. If one may enjoin, the other may retort by injunction, and thus the parties be without remedy.” See *Peck v. Jenness*, 7 How. 625; *Taylor v. Royal Saxon*, 1 Wall. 311.

If the decree in this case can be of any value whatever, let us look at the consequences which may possibly and probably will arise, in case it is enforced.

Orton, claiming as the *bona fide* assignee and purchaser of the title bond given by Knab, has a bill pending in the State court to compel a transfer of the legal title. Pending this litigation, Knab assigns the legal title to a citizen of another State, who comes into the court of the United States praying an injunction against Orton from setting up his title. Suppose the State court decrees the title to be in Orton, and compels Knab and Smith, his assignee, to release the legal title to him? Now the court below has made a decree that enjoins Orton from ever setting up his title against Smith. It is true the decree protests against interference with proceedings in a State court; but unless it is construed so as to be a perfect “*felo de se*,” it must be enforced in favor of complainant somehow. When the sheriff puts Orton in possession under the decree of the State court, and expels Smith, the circuit court, by its officer, must replace Smith, or imprison Orton for a contempt. This would indeed be a humiliating spectacle. Such a disreputable collision of jurisdictions should be sedulously avoided. This can only be done by refusing to entertain a bill of peace for an injunction when the title is in litigation in a court of concurrent jurisdiction; otherwise, the result of a bill of peace may be not peace but war; and, instead of dispelling a “cloud” from the title of either party, will doubly increase the darkness and difficulty with which it was environed.

Decree of the circuit court is therefore reversed, and the bill dismissed with costs—but without prejudice.



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The Bark Mopang.

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## THE BARK MOPANG.

SAMUEL WARD, Appellant, *v.* WILLIAM M. PECK and others, Appellees.

18 H. 267.

## ADMIRALTY—JURISDICTION IN PETITORY SUITS.

1. This court does not follow the admiralty courts of England, between the Restoration and the statute 3 and 4 Victoria, c. 65, § 4, in declining jurisdiction in petitory actions for vessels, but asserts the authority of the court as practiced before that period over that question.
2. It being conceded that the sale of a vessel by the master was not authorized by the circumstances in which he was placed, the sale is not confirmed or ratified by the act of the owners in abandoning the vessel to the underwriters in the same circumstances.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and the case is fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for appellant.

*Mr. Stanton*, for appellees.

Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

The pleadings in this case present but the single question of the title or ownership of the bark Mopang.

Originally, the court of admiralty in England entertained jurisdiction of petitory as well as mere possessory actions. Since the Restoration, that court, through the jealous interference of courts of law, had ceased to pronounce directly on questions of ownership or property. Petitory suits were silently abandoned, and, if in a possessory action a question of mere property arose, especially of a more complicated nature, it declined to interfere.

This "submission to authority rather than reason" has continued till the statute of 3 and 4 Vict. c. 65, § 4, restored to the admiralty plenary jurisdiction of such questions. See case of *The Aurora*, 3 Rob. 133, 136, and the *Warrior*, 2 Dodson, 288, 2 Brown Civ. & Ad. 430.

In this country, where the courts of admiralty have not been subjected to such jealous restraints, the ancient jurisdiction over petitory suits or causes of property has been retained. In [ \* 268 ] the \* case of *The Tilton*, (5 Mason, 465,) Mr. Justice Story has examined this question with his usual learning and ability. The authority of that case has never been questioned in our courts. See *Taylor v. Royal Saxon*, 1 Wall. 322. In the

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case of the *New England Ins. Co. v. Brig Sarah Anne*, 13 Pet. 387, in this court, the only question was the title or ownership of the brig, yet the cause was entertained without any expression of doubt as to jurisdiction.

The following agreed statement of facts presents the merits of this case:

“That the libellants are the owners of the said bark ‘Mopang,’ unless their title has been divested by the sale made by the master under the following circumstances: The bark sailed from New Orleans on or about the 29th November, 1846, for Tampico and other Mexican ports. That, on or about the 6th of December thereafter, she struck aground, was abandoned by her officers and crew on the north breakers off the bar of Tampico; that she floated over the bar, and was boarded by one Clifton, who refused to deliver her to the master; that a claim for salvage was made; that by agreement between the master and Clifton, the vessel was sold to the claimant, Ward, on the ——. It is admitted that the sale to Ward was unauthorized by the circumstances in which the master was placed.

“The libellants had a valued policy upon the vessel taken out at New Orleans. On the 9th day of January, 1847, they gave notice of abandonment to the underwriters as for a total loss, who refused to accept the same. They were sued for a total loss by libellants. Judgment found for defendant.”

This statement amounts to an admission of want of title in the claimant. The abandonment by her owners to the underwriters could not affect the title of the claimant, by way of ratification or estoppel. The insurance is but a wager between the parties to it, on the safety of the vessel. By the rule of the contract the ship may be abandoned, and the whole insurance claimed, when the damages exceed half the value.

Nothing but extreme necessity can justify the sale of the vessel by the master. The abandonment was based on the damage done to the vessel at the time of the accident. If accepted, the master became the agent of the insurer; and whether accepted or not, his act, without authority, can receive no ratification from allegations or admissions made by any party in a dispute on the contract of assurance, where the inquiry as to the act of the master was irrelevant. The defendant, having obtained possession unlawfully, was a trespasser, and can no more plead the abandonment as a confirmation of his title than if he had obtained it by theft or piracy; moreover, if the circumstances \* would [\* 269] have justified a sale by the master, no abandonment was

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necessary. It cannot, therefore, by any possible implication, amount to a confirmation of such sale.

The judgment of the circuit court is affirmed.

Mr. Justice DANIEL. I dissent from the decision just pronounced: 1. On the ground that this case is not one regularly appertaining to a court of admiralty. 2. Because this decision professes to claim a power and jurisdiction admitted by the decision itself never to have been heretofore conceded to nor exerted by courts of admiralty in this country, whose power and jurisdiction in future, are to be traced for their origin to this cause alone.

With respect to the objection first stated: this cause presents no example of a maritime contract or of a marine tort. It is simply a contest as to the right of property in a subject situated within the ordinary and settled jurisdiction of the courts of common law and equity of the State of Louisiana, and could have been there as effectively determined by an action of detinue or trover, or by a bill in equity if there was danger of an eloinement of the subject in controversy, as it could possibly be in admiralty; and this fact alone should have been a reason sufficient against an abandonment of the adequate and familiar modes of administering justice, and an unnecessary resort to a tribunal which in England, we are told by Lord Hale, was never established either by common law or by statute, but had grown up entirely by encroachment and sufferance.

It is true that the subject in controversy here is a vessel; but if that single fact could justify the interposition of the admiralty, it would equally imply the same power in that jurisdiction over any dispute concerning the right of property in a vessel, although she might still be upon the stocks, and although she had never reached the water, or might, by some casualty, never touch that element.

This was simply a question of property arising out of the extent of power in an agent to dispose of it—a common and every-day question of law.

2. It is admitted that the jurisdiction now asserted for the first time in this court—namely, the jurisdiction in petitory suits—did not belong to the admiralty in England, or was not exercised by them for several hundred years at least; and that a recent statute in the present reign, had been enacted expressly to confer that jurisdiction. It has also been said, that the jurisdiction thus recently authorized, had, in the olden time, existed in the admiralty, and had been restrained or forbidden only by the jealousy

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of the common lawyers. This appears to me to be an \*argument not founded upon the judicial history of the [ \* 270 ] country, and one which is neither logical nor tenable.

A reference to others of the highest and most venerable authorities, which might be added to that of Lord Hale already cited, demolishes entirely the foundation on which this argument is based. The argument is in itself illogical and illusory; for had this jurisdiction been even legitimate in the admiralty, it might doubtless have been vindicated and maintained in despite of an illegal and unfounded jealousy of the common lawyers. It never could have been forced to yield to so baseless an opposition. No authority so potent as that of an express statute could have been required, to create what not only already had being, but which was established and venerable from justice and from lapse of time.

If the inhibition had been the mere creature of jealousy or prejudice, a returning sense of right and a conviction of public advantage, would, in this as in other instances falling within the power of the courts, have corrected previous errors. The very fact of the enactment of a statute, such as that referred to, is strong evidence to show that the jurisdiction it confers had no previous or rather no rightful existence.

But it is said that no jealousy like that once felt in England against the admiralty exists in this country; and, therefore, the inveterate powers ascribed to it formerly in England, are free and unfettered for its exercise in this country. This course of argument naturally suggests with me the following inquiries: What fetters or limitations are recognized as placed upon the admiralty jurisdiction in the United States? Freed from the checks and restraints imposed upon such a jurisdiction in that country, from which the system was transferred to us, what are the checks imposed upon it here? Are there any such checks? Does it, either in theory or in practice, recognize any such—how or where are they defined or ascertained? Has it any system at all, or is it left to the judgment or fancy of those who assume to exercise power under its name?

Too true does it seem to me the case, that the ambitious and undefined pretensions of this branch of jurisprudence, have found greater favor here than in my view, is compatible with civil liberty, with public policy or private benefit; and hence I have been the more inclined to watch and prevent its dangerous encroachments, and in all sincerity can, in contemplating the favor extended to those encroachments, exclaim, "*hinc illæ lachrymæ.*"

For the jurisdiction here claimed for the admiralty, we are

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referred to the treatise of Mr. Arthur Brown, professor of civil law in Ireland. I have no recollection of having before seen [ \* 271 ] or \* heard the doctrines of this professor recognized as authority; and with respect to his theories, it may justly be remarked, that if these are to be adopted as law, there is no excess of extravagance to be found in the exploded notions of Sir Leoline Jenkins, or anywhere else, which will not find an apology, nay, a full justification, in the book of this civil-law doctor. If the theories of this professor are to be regarded as binding, his disciples may look forward at no distant day to an announcement from this bench, as there has been formerly from that of one of the circuits, of the doctrine, that a policy of insurance (a mere wager laid upon the safety of a vessel) is strictly and essentially a maritime contract, because, forsooth, the vessel had to navigate the ocean.

It seems somewhat singular, however, that Mr. Brown should be appealed to in support of the authority now claimed for the admiralty, when in truth his book again and again admits, that such jurisdiction had been utterly repudiated in England as a sheer usurpation, and may appropriately be styled a jeremiad over the lost authority and splendor of a system which he would exalt to the control of every other branch of jurisprudence.

I object, in all cases, to the decision of questions not strictly in point, or which have not been regularly discussed, and not only maturely but necessarily considered. If there is any one source of embarrassment more prolific than all others, it is this very practice. I cannot perceive the necessity nor the propriety of deciding matters in advance. The effect of such a practice is either the difficulty of getting clear of irregular and inapposite conclusions, or the sanction of them with the view of maintaining consistency whether right or wrong.

A great portion of the admiralty jurisdiction now permitted in this country, may be traced to a *dictum* in argument in the case of *The General Smith*, 4 Wheat. p. 444, in the assertion of a doctrine which, if now for the first time discussed and examined, might not command the sanction of this tribunal.

It is that tendency of error once countenanced or tolerated to grow into precedent, which has ever enjoined it upon me as a sacred duty to resist its approaches before they have been matured into power; and even the conviction of an inability to accomplish this result, is with me no dispensation from the duty of resistance.

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Murray's Lessee v. Hoboken Land and Improvement Co.

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JOHN DEN, *ex dem.* JAMES B. MURRAY *et al.*, Plaintiff, v. THE HOBOKEN LAND AND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY.

SAME v. SAME.

SAME v. RUTSEN SUCKLEY *et al.*

18 H. 272.

18h	272
L-ed	372
133	669

SUMMARY PROCEEDINGS AGAINST REVENUE OFFICERS—JUDICIAL POWER—DUE PROCESS OF LAW.

1. The act of May 15, 1820, which authorized the solicitor of the Treasury to issue a warrant of distress against the property of a revenue officer, for the amount found due on adjusting his accounts in the treasury department, is constitutional.
2. Though partaking of the nature of judicial power in some respects, it is a power long exercised by the executive department in England and in the States, and is not prohibited by the division of executive and judicial power in the federal constitution.
3. That congress may, by consent, authorize the defendant to bring the case, after levy, into a court for judicial investigation, is not a valid argument against this proposition.
4. Such a proceeding is due process of law within the meaning of the fifth amendment to the constitution. What is meant by due process of law elaborately discussed.
5. It is due process of law, because it is the usual and appropriate mode by which the English government, from whose *Magna Charta* the phrase is derived, has always used it or its equivalent in enforcing from debtors the amounts due the government on account of its revenues.
6. As it is not a search warrant, it is not within the provision of the constitution requiring affidavits to make such warrants valid.
7. The return of the marshal that he had levied on lands, on such a warrant, is *prima facie* evidence that there was no personal property on which he could levy.

THESE cases come to this court on a certificate of division of opinion between the judges of the circuit court for the district of New Jersey.

It was an action of ejectment, in which defendants claimed under a levy and sale made under a warrant issued in pursuance of the act of May 15, 1820, (3 Stats. at Large, 592,) against Swartwout, and the plaintiffs, under a sale on a judgment against the same party subsequent to the levy of the distress warrant. A special verdict found the facts on which the warrant issued; and the principal question on which the judges divided was, "whether the said warrant of distress, in the special verdict mentioned, and the proceedings thereon and anterior thereto, under which defendants claim title, are sufficient, under the constitution of the United States and the law of the land, to pass and transfer the title and estate of the said Swartwout in and to the premises in question as against the lessors of plaintiff."

*Mr. Van Winkle* and *Mr. Wood*, for plaintiff.

*Mr. Zabriskie*, *Mr. Gillett*, and *Mr. Bradley*, for defendants.



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[ \* 274 ] \*Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court.

This case comes before us on a certificate of division of opinion of the judges of the circuit court of the United States for the district of New Jersey. It is an action of ejectment, in which both parties claim title under Samuel Swartwout—the plaintiffs, under the levy of an execution on the 10th day of April, 1839, and the defendants, under a sale made by the marshal of the United States for the district of New Jersey, on the 1st day of June, 1839—by virtue of what is denominated a distress warrant, issued by the solicitor of the treasury under the act of congress of May 15, 1820, entitled, “An act providing for the better organization of the treasury department.” This act having provided, by its first section, that a lien for the amount due should exist on the lands of the debtor from the time of the levy and record thereof in the office of the district court of the United States for the proper district, and the date of that levy in this case being prior to the date of the judgment under which the plaintiffs’ title was made, the question occurred in the circuit court, “whether the said warrant of distress in the special verdict mentioned, and the proceedings thereon and anterior thereto, under which the defendants claim title, are sufficient, under the constitution of the United States and the law of the land, to pass and transfer the title and estate of the said Swartwout in and to the premises in question, as against the lessors of the plaintiff.” Upon this question, the judges being of opposite opinions, it was certified to this court, and has been argued by counsel.

[ \* 275 ] \*No objection has been taken to the warrant on account of any defect or irregularity in the proceedings which preceded its issue. It is not denied that they were in conformity with the requirements of the act of congress. The special verdict finds that Swartwout was collector of the customs for the port of New York for eight years before the 29th of March, 1838; that, on the 10th of November, 1838, his account, as such collector, was audited by the first auditor, and certified by the first comptroller of the treasury; and for the balance thus found, amounting to the sum of \$1,374,119<sup>65</sup>/<sub>100</sub>, the warrant in question was issued by the solicitor of the treasury. Its validity is denied by the plaintiffs, upon the ground that so much of the act of congress as authorized it, is in conflict with the constitution of the United States.

In support of this position, the plaintiff relies on that part of the first section of the third article of the constitution, which requires the judicial power of the United States to be vested in one supreme court and in such inferior courts as congress may, from time to

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time, ordain and establish; the judges whereof shall hold their offices during good behavior, and shall, at stated times, receive for their services a compensation, which shall not be diminished during their continuance in office. Also, on the second section of the same article, which declares that the judicial power shall extend to controversies to which the United States shall be a party.

It must be admitted that, if the auditing of this account, and the ascertainment of its balance, and the issuing of this process, was an exercise of the judicial power of the United States, the proceeding was void; for the officers who performed these acts could exercise no part of that judicial power. They neither constituted a court of the United States, nor were they, or either of them, so connected with any such court as to perform even any of the ministerial duties which arise out of judicial proceedings.

The question, whether these acts were an exercise of the judicial power of the United States, can best be considered under another inquiry, raised by the further objection of the plaintiff, that the effect of the proceedings authorized by the act in question is to deprive the party, against whom the warrant issues, of his liberty and property, "without due process of law;" and, therefore, is in conflict with the fifth article of the amendments of the constitution.

Taking these two objections together, they raise the questions, whether, under the constitution of the United States, a collector of the customs, from whom a balance of account has been found to be due by accounting officers of the treasury, designated for that purpose by law, can be deprived of his liberty, or property, \*in order to enforce payment of that balance, without the [ \* 276 ] exercise of the judicial power of the United States, and yet by due process of law, within the meaning of those terms in the constitution; and if so, then, secondly, whether the warrant in question was such due process of law?

The words, "due process of law," were undoubtedly intended to convey the same meaning as the words, "by the law of the land," in *Magna Charta*. Lord Coke, in his commentary on those words, (2 Inst. 50,) says they mean due process of law. The constitutions which had been adopted by the several States before the formation of the federal constitution, following the language of the great charter more closely, generally contained the words, "but by the judgment of his peers, or the law of the land." The ordinance of congress of July 13, 1787, for the government of the territory of the United States northwest of the river Ohio, used the same words.

The constitution of the United States, as adopted, contained the provision, that "the trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeach-

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ment, shall be by jury." When the fifth article of amendment containing the words now in question was made, the trial by jury in criminal cases had thus already been provided for. By the sixth and seventh articles of amendment, further special provisions were separately made for that mode of trial in civil and criminal cases. To have followed, as in the State constitutions, and in the ordinance of 1787, the words of *Magna Charta*, and declared that no person shall be deprived of his life, liberty, or property but by the judgment of his peers or the law of the land, would have been in part superfluous and inappropriate. To have taken the clause, "law of the land," without its immediate context, might possibly have given rise to doubts, which would be effectually dispelled by using those words which the great commentator on *Magna Charta* had declared to be the true meaning of the phrase, "law of the land," in that instrument, and which were undoubtedly then received as their true meaning.

That the warrant now in question is legal process, is not denied. It was issued in conformity with an act of congress. But is it "due process of law?" The constitution contains no description of those processes which it was intended to allow or forbid. It does not even declare what principles are to be applied to ascertain whether it be due process. It is manifest that it was not left to the legislative power to enact any process which might be devised. The article is a restraint on the legislative as well as on the executive and judicial powers of the government, and cannot be so construed as to leave congress free to make any process "due process of law,"

by its mere will. To what principles, then, are we to [ \* 277 ] resort to ascertain whether \* this process, enacted by congress, is due process? To this the answer must be twofold. We must examine the constitution itself, to see whether this process be in conflict with any of its provisions. If not found to be so, we must look to those settled usages and modes of proceeding existing in the common and statute law of England, before the emigration of our ancestors, and which are shown not to have been unsuited to their civil and political condition by having been acted on by them after the settlement of this country. We apprehend there has been no period, since the establishment of the English monarchy, when there has not been, by the law of the land, a summary method for the recovery of debts due to the crown, and especially those due from receivers of the revenues. It is difficult, at this day, to trace with precision all the proceedings had for these purposes in the earliest ages of the common law. That they were summary and severe, and had been used for purposes of oppression,

is inferable from the fact that one chapter of *Magna Charta* treats of their restraint. It declares: "We or our bailiffs shall not seize any land or rent for any debt as long as the present goods and chattels of the debtor do suffice to pay the debt, and the debtor himself be ready to satisfy therefor. Neither shall the pledges of the debtor be distrained, as long as the principal debtor is sufficient for the payment of the debt; and if the principal debtor fail in payment of the debt, having nothing wherewith to pay, or will not pay where he is able, the pledges shall answer for the debt. And if they will, they shall have the lands and rents of the debtor until they be satisfied of the debt which they before paid for him, except that the principal debtor can show himself to be acquitted against the said sureties."

By the common law, the body, lands, and goods of the king's debtor were liable to be levied on to obtain payment. In conformity with the above provision of *Magna Charta*, a conditional writ was framed, commanding the sheriff to inquire of the goods and chattels of the debtor, and, if they were insufficient, then to extend on the lands. 3 Co. 12 *b*; Com. Dig., Debt, G. 2; 2 Inst. 19. But it is said that since the statute 33 Hen. VIII., c. 39, the practice has been to issue the writ in an absolute form, without requiring any previous inquisition as to the goods. Gilbert's Exch. 127.

To authorize a writ of extent, however, the debt must be matter of record in the king's exchequer. The 33 Hen. VIII., c. 39, § 50, made all specialty debts due to the king of the same force and effect as debts by statute staple, thus giving to such debts the effect of debts of record. In regard to debts due upon simple contract; other than those due from collectors of the revenue and other accountants of the crown, the practice, from very  
\* ancient times, has been to issue a commission to inquire [\* 278]  
as to the existence of the debt.

This commission being returned, the debt found was thereby evidenced by a record, and an extent could issue thereon. No notice was required to be given to the alleged debtor of the execution of this commission, (2 Tidd's Pr. 1047,) though it seems that, in some cases, an order for notice might be obtained. 1 Ves. 269. Formerly, no witnesses were examined by the commission, (Chitty's Prerog. 267; West, 22;) the affidavit prepared to obtain an order for an immediate extent being the only evidence introduced. But this practice has been recently changed. 11 Price, 29. By the statute 13 Eliz. ch. 4, balances due from receivers of the revenue and all other accountants of the crown were placed on the same

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footing as debts acknowledged to be due by statute staple. These balances were found by auditors, the particular officers acting thereon having been, from time to time, varied by legislation and usage. The different methods of accounting in ancient and modern times are described in Mr. Price's Treatise on the Law and Practice of the Exchequer, ch. 9. Such balances, when found, were certified to what was called the pipe office, to be given in charge to the sheriffs for their levy. Price, 231.

If an accountant failed to render his accounts, a process was issued, termed a *capias nomine districtionis*, against the body, goods, and lands of the accountant. Price, 162, 233, note 3.

This brief sketch of the modes of proceeding to ascertain and enforce payment of balances due from receivers of the revenue in England, is sufficient to show that the methods of ascertaining the existence and amount of such debts, and compelling their payment, have varied widely from the usual course of the common law on other subjects; and that, as respects such debts due from such officers, "the law of the land" authorized the employment of auditors, and an inquisition without notice, and a species of execution bearing a very close resemblance to what is termed a warrant of distress in the act of 1820, now in question.

It is certain that this diversity in "the law of the land" between public defaulters and ordinary debtors was understood in this country, and entered into the legislation of the colonies and provinces, and more especially of the States, after the declaration of independence and before the formation of the constitution of the United States. Not only was the process of distress in nearly or quite universal use for the collection of taxes, but what was generally termed a warrant of distress, running against the body, goods, and chattels of defaulting receivers of public money, [ \* 279 ] was issued to some public officer, to whom was \*committed the power to ascertain the amount of the default, and by such warrant proceed to collect it. Without a wearisome repetition of details, it will be sufficient to give one section from the Massachusetts act of 1786: "That if any constable or collector, to whom any tax or assessment shall be committed to collect, shall be remiss and negligent of his duty, in not levying and paying unto the treasurer and receiver general such sum or sums of money as he shall from time to time have received, and as ought by him to have been paid within the respective time set and limited by the assessor's warrant, pursuant to law, the treasurer and receiver general is hereby empowered, after the expiration of the time so set, by warrant under his hand and seal, directed to the sheriff or

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his deputy, to cause such sum and sums of money to be levied by distress and sale of such deficient constable or collector's estate, real and personal, returning the overplus, if any there be; and, for want of such estate, to take the body of such constable or collector, and imprison him until he shall pay the same; which warrant the sheriff or his deputy is hereby empowered and required to execute accordingly." Then follows another provision, that if the deficient sum shall not be made by the first warrant, another shall issue against the town; and if its proper authorities shall fail to take the prescribed means to raise and pay the same, a like warrant of distress shall go against the estates and bodies of the assessors of such town. Laws of Massachusetts, vol. i, p. 266. Provisions not distinguishable from these in principle may be found in the acts of Connecticut, (Revision of 1784, p. 198;) of Pennsylvania, 1782, (2 Laws of Penn. 13;) of South Carolina, 1788, (5 Stats. of S. C. 55;) New York, 1788, (1 Jones & Varick's Laws, 34;) see also 1 Henning's Stats. of Virginia, 319, 343; 12 Ibid. 562; Laws of Vermont, (1797, 1800,) 340. Since the formation of the constitution of the United States, other States have passed similar laws. See 7 Louis. An. R. 192. Congress, from an early period, and in repeated instances, has legislated in a similar manner. By the fifteenth section of the "Act to lay and collect a direct tax within the United States," of July 14, 1798, the supervisor of each district was authorized and required to issue a warrant of distress against any delinquent collector and his sureties, to be levied upon the goods and chattels, and for want thereof upon the body of such collector; and, failing of satisfaction thereby, upon the goods and chattels of the sureties. 1 Stats. at Large, 602. And again, in 1813, (3 Stats. at Large, 33, § 28,) and 1815, (3 Stats. at Large, 177, § 33,) the comptroller of the treasury was empowered to issue a similar warrant against collectors of the customs and their sureties. This legislative construction of the constitution, commencing so early in the government, \* when the first occasion for this manner of proceeding [\* 280] arose, continued throughout its existence, and repeatedly acted on by the judiciary and the executive, is entitled to no inconsiderable weight upon the question whether the proceeding adopted by it was "due process of law." *Prigg v. Pennsylvania*, 16 Pet. 621; *United States v. Nourse*, 9 Pet. 8; *Randolph's case*, 2 Brock. 447; *Nourse's case*, 4 Cranch, C. C. R. 151; *Bullock's case*, (cited 6 Pet. 485, note.)

Tested by the common and statute law of England prior to the emigration of our ancestors, and by the laws of many of the States



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at the time of the adoption of this amendment, the proceedings authorized by the act of 1820 cannot be denied to be due process of law, when applied to the ascertainment and recovery of balances due to the government from a collector of customs, unless there exists in the constitution some other provision which restrains congress from authorizing such proceedings. For, though "due process of law" generally implies and includes *actor, reus, judex*, regular allegations, opportunity to answer, and a trial according to some settled course of judicial proceedings, (2 Inst. 47, 50; Hoke v. Henderson, 4 Dev. N. C. Rep. 15; Taylor v. Porter, 4 Hill, 146; Van Zandt v. Waddel, 2 Yerger, 260; State Bank v. Cooper, Ibid. 599; Jones's Heirs v. Perry, 10 Ibid. 59; Greene v. Briggs, 1 Curtis, 311,) yet, this is not universally true. There may be, and we have seen that there are cases, under the law of England after *Magna Charta*, and as it was brought to this country and acted on here, in which process, in its nature final, issues against the body, lands, and goods of certain public debtors without any such trial; and this brings us to the question, whether those provisions of the constitution which relate to the judicial power are incompatible with these proceedings?

That the auditing of the accounts of a receiver of public moneys may be, in an enlarged sense, a judicial act, must be admitted. So are all those administrative duties the performance of which involves an inquiry into the existence of facts and the application to them of rules of law. In this sense the act of the president in calling out the militia under the act of 1795, 12 Wheat. 19, or of a commissioner who makes a certificate for the extradition of a criminal, under a treaty, is judicial. But it is not sufficient to bring such matters under the judicial power, that they involve the exercise of judgment upon law and fact. *United States v. Ferreira*, 13 How. 40. It is necessary to go further, and show not only that the adjustment of the balances due from accounting officers may be, but from their nature must be, controversies to which

the United States is a party, within the meaning of the [ \* 281 ] second section of the third article of the \* constitution.

We do not doubt the power of congress to provide by law that such a question shall form the subject-matter of a suit in which the judicial power can be exerted. The act of 1820 makes such a provision for reviewing the decision of the accounting officers of the treasury. But, until reviewed, it is final and binding; and the question is, whether its subject-matter is necessarily, and without regard to the consent of congress, a judicial controversy. And we are of opinion it is not.

Among the legislative powers of congress are the powers "to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises; to pay the debts, and provide for the common defense and welfare of the United States, to raise and support armies; to provide and maintain a navy, and to make all laws which may be necessary and proper for carrying into execution those powers." What officers should be appointed to collect the revenue thus authorized to be raised, and to disburse it in payment of the debts of the United States; what duties should be required of them; when and how, and to whom they should account, and what security they should furnish, and to what remedies they should be subjected to enforce the proper discharge of their duties, congress was to determine. In the exercise of their powers, they have required collectors of customs to be appointed; made it incumbent on them to account, from time to time, with certain officers of the treasury department, and to furnish sureties, by bond, for the payment of all balances of the public money which may become due from them. And by the act of 1820, now in question, they have undertaken to provide summary means to compel these officers—and in case of their default, their sureties—to pay such balances of the public money as may be in their hands.

The power to collect and disburse revenue, and to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying that power into effect, includes all known and appropriate means of effectually collecting and disbursing that revenue, unless some such means should be forbidden in some other part of the constitution. The power has not been exhausted by the receipt of the money by the collector. Its purpose is to raise money and use it in payment of the debts of the government; and, whoever may have possession of the public money, until it is actually disbursed, the power to use those known and appropriate means to secure its due application continues.

As we have already shown, the means provided by the act of 1820, do not differ in principle from those employed in England from remote antiquity—and in many of the States, so far as we know, without objection—for this purpose, at the time the \* constitution was formed. It may be added, that [ \* 282 ] probably there are few governments which do or can permit their claims for public taxes, either on the citizen or the officer employed for their collection or disbursement, to become subjects of judicial controversy, according to the course of the law of the land. Imperative necessity has forced a distinction between such claims and all others, which has sometimes been carried out by summary

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methods of proceeding, and sometimes by systems of fines and penalties, but always in some way observed and yielded to.

It is true that in England all these proceedings were had in what is denominated the court of exchequer, in which Lord Coke says, 4 Inst. 115, the barons are the sovereign auditors of the kingdom. But the barons exercise in person no judicial power in auditing accounts, and it is necessary to remember that the exchequer includes two distinct organizations, one of which has charge of the revenues of the crown, and the other has long been in fact, and now is for all purposes, one of the judicial courts of the kingdom, whose proceedings are and have been as distinct, in most respects, from those of the revenue side of the exchequer, as the proceedings of the circuit court of this district are from those of the treasury; and it would be an unwarrantable assumption to conclude that, because the accounts of receivers of revenue were settled in what was denominated the court of exchequer, they were judicial controversies between the king and his subjects, according to the ordinary course of the common law or equity. The fact, as we have already seen, was otherwise.

It was strongly urged by the plaintiff's counsel, that though the government might have the rightful power to provide a summary remedy for the recovery of its public dues, aside from any exercise of the judicial power, yet it had not done so in this instance. That it had enabled the debtor to apply to the judicial power, and having thus brought the subject-matter under its cognizance, it was not for the government to say that the subject-matter was not within the judicial power. That if it were not in its nature a judicial controversy, congress could not make it such, nor give jurisdiction over it to the district courts. In short, the argument is, that if this were not, in its nature, a judicial controversy, congress could not have conferred on the district court power to determine it upon a bill filed by the collector. If it be such a controversy, then it is subject to the judicial power alone; and the fact that congress has enabled the district court to pass upon it, is conclusive evidence that it is a judicial controversy.

We cannot admit the correctness of the last position. [ \* 283 ] If we \* were of opinion that this subject-matter cannot be the subject of a judicial controversy, and that, consequently, it cannot be made a subject of judicial cognizance, the consequence would be, that the attempt to bring it under the jurisdiction of a court of the United States would be ineffectual. But the previous proceedings of the executive department would not

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necessarily be affected thereby. They might be final, instead of being subject to judicial review.

But the argument leaves out of view an essential element in the case, and also assumes something which cannot be admitted.

It assumes that the entire subject-matter is or is not, in every mode of presentation, a judicial controversy, essentially and in its own nature, aside from the will of congress to permit it to be so; and it leaves out of view the fact that the United States is a party.

It is necessary to take into view some settled rules.

Though, generally, both public and private wrongs are redressed through judicial action, there are more summary extrajudicial remedies for both. An instance of extrajudicial redress of a private wrong is, the recapture of goods by their lawful owner; of a public wrong, by a private person, is the abatement of a public nuisance; and the recovery of public dues by a summary process of distress, issued by some public officer authorized by law, is an instance of redress of a particular kind of public wrong, by the act of the public through its authorized agents. There is, however, an important distinction between these. Though a private person may retake his property, or abate a nuisance, he is directly responsible for his acts to the proper judicial tribunals. His authority to do these acts depends not merely on the law, but upon the existence of such facts as are, in point of law, sufficient to constitute that authority; and he may be required, by an action at law, to prove those facts; but a public agent, who acts pursuant to the command of a legal precept, can justify his act by the production of such precept. He cannot be made responsible in a judicial tribunal for obeying the lawful command of the government; and the government itself, which gave the command, cannot be sued without its own consent.

At the same time there can be no doubt that the mere question, whether a collector of the customs is indebted to the United States, may be one of judicial cognizance. It is competent for the United States to sue any of its debtors in a court of law. It is equally clear that the United States may consent to be sued, and may yield this consent upon such terms and under such restrictions as it may think just. Though both the marshal and the government are exempt from suit, for anything done by \*the [\* 284] former in obedience to legal process, still, congress may provide by law, that both, or either, shall, in a particular class of cases, and under such restrictions as they may think proper to impose, come into a court of law or equity and abide by its determination. The United States may thus place the government upon

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the same ground which is occupied by private persons who proceed to take extrajudicial remedies for their wrongs, and they may do so to such extent, and with such restrictions, as may be thought fit.

When, therefore, the act of 1820 enacts, that after the levy of the distress warrant has been begun, the collector may bring before a district court the question, whether he is indebted as recited in the warrant, it simply waives a privilege which belongs to the government, and consents to make the legality of its future proceedings dependent on the judgment of the court; as we have already stated in case of a private person, every fact upon which the legality of the extrajudicial remedy depends may be drawn in question by a suit against him. The United States consents that this fact of indebtedness may be drawn in question by a suit against them. Though they might have withheld their consent, we think that, by granting it, nothing which may not be a subject of judicial cognizance is brought before the court.

To avoid misconstruction upon so grave a subject, we think it proper to state that we do not consider congress can either withdraw from judicial cognizance any matter which, from its nature, is the subject of a suit at the common law, or in equity, or admiralty; nor, on the other hand, can it bring under the judicial power a matter which, from its nature, is not a subject for judicial determination. At the same time there are matters, involving public rights, which may be presented in such form that the judicial power is capable of acting on them, and which are susceptible of judicial determination, but which congress may or may not bring within the cognizance of the courts of the United States, as it may deem proper. Equitable claims to land by the inhabitants of ceded territories form a striking instance of such a class of cases; and as it depends upon the will of congress whether a remedy in the courts shall be allowed at all, in such cases, they may regulate it and prescribe such rules of determination as they may think just and needful. Thus it has been repeatedly decided in this class of cases, that upon their trial the acts of executive officers, done under the authority of congress, were conclusive, either upon particular facts involved in the inquiry or upon the whole title. *Foley v. Harrison*, 15 How. 433; *Burgess v. Gray*, 16 How. 48; — *v. The Minnesota Mining Company* at the present term.

It is true, also, that even in a suit between private persons to try a question of private right, the action of the executive power, upon a matter committed to its determination by the constitution and laws, is conclusive. *Luther v. Borden*, 7 How. 1; *Doe v. Braden*, 16 How. 635.

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To apply these principles to the case before us, we say that, though a suit may be brought against the marshal for seizing property under such a warrant of distress, and he may be put to show his justification; yet the action of the executive power in issuing the warrant, pursuant to the act of 1820, passed under the powers to collect and disburse the revenue granted by the constitution, is conclusive evidence of the facts recited in it, and of the authority to make the levy; that though no suit can be brought against the United States without the consent of congress, yet congress may consent to have a suit brought, to try the question whether the collector be indebted, that being a subject capable of judicial determination, and may empower a court to act on that determination, and restrain the levy of the warrant of distress within the limits of the debt judicially found to exist.

It was further urged that, by thus subjecting the proceeding to the determination of a court, it did conclusively appear that there was no such necessity for a summary remedy, by the action of the executive power, as was essential to enable congress to authorize this mode of proceeding.

But it seems to us that the just inference from the entire law is, that there was such a necessity for the warrant and the commencement of the levy, but not for its completion, if the collector should interpose, and file his bill and give security. The provision that he may file his bill and give security, and thus arrest the summary proceedings, only proves that congress thought it not necessary to pursue them, after such security should be given, until a decision should be made by the court. It has no tendency to prove they were not, in the judgment of congress, of the highest necessity under all other circumstances; and of this necessity congress alone is the judge.

The remaining objection to this warrant is, that it was issued without the support of an oath or affirmation, and so was forbidden by the fourth article of the amendments of the constitution. But this article has no reference to civil proceedings for the recovery of debts, of which a search warrant is not made part. The process, in this case, is termed, in the act of congress, a warrant of distress. The name bestowed upon it cannot affect its constitutional validity. In substance, it is an extent authorizing a levy for the satisfaction of a debt; and as no other authority is conferred, to make searches or seizures, than is ordinarily embraced in every execution issued upon a \*recog- [\* 286] nizance, or a stipulation in the admiralty, we are of opinion it was not invalid for this cause.



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Some objection was made to the proceedings of the marshal under the warrant, because he did not levy on certain shares of corporate stock belonging to Swartwout, and because it does not appear, by the return of the warrant, that he had not goods and chattels wherewith to satisfy the exigency of the warrant. In respect to the corporate stocks, they do not appear to have been goods or chattels, subject to such levy at the time it was made; and the return of the marshal, that he had levied on the lands by virtue of the warrant, is, at least, *prima facie* evidence that his levy was not irregular, by reason of the existence of goods and chattels of the collector subject to his process.

The third question is, therefore, to be answered in the affirmative.

This renders the other questions proposed immaterial, and no answer need be returned thereto.

The other two cases—John Den, *ex dem.* James B. Murray *et al.* v. The Hoboken Land and Improvement Company, and John Den, *ex dem.* William P. Rathbone *et al.* v. Rutsen Suckley *et al.*, are disposed of by this opinion, the same questions having been certified therein.

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WILLIAM D. NUTT, Executor, &c., Plaintiff in Error, v. PHILIP H. MINOR.

18 H. 286.

DEMURRER TO EVIDENCE.

On a demurrer to evidence, or a prayer to instruct that there is no evidence of a contract set up in the declaration, the court properly overruled it, if there was any evidence from which the jury might have found the implied contract.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the District of Columbia.

The case is stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Davis* and *Mr. Bradley*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Badger* and *Mr. Lawrence*, for defendant.

Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court.

Minor sued Nutt as executor of Alexander Hunter, and sought to recover on a *quantum meruit* for services rendered as clerk for Hunter in the marshal's office for fourteen and a half years.

The defence is, that Minor entered on the service under a special agreement to receive four hundred dollars a year.

[ \* 287 ] \* The bill of exceptions states, that "on the trial of this cause, the plaintiff, to maintain the issue on his part,

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gave evidence tending to prove that he had rendered the services mentioned in the declaration, during the period therein stated, and that the said services were faithful, valuable, and unremitting, during all the time aforesaid; and he further gave evidence by Daniel Minor, a competent witness, that the engagement under which the plaintiff commenced to serve as such clerk as aforesaid to the deceased, Hunter, was made verbally in the presence of the witness; that the witness was a surety in the official bond of the deceased, as marshal for the District of Columbia; that plaintiff is the brother of witness; that witness was the deputy marshal of Alexandria county from 1806 or 1807 down to 1826; and that the plaintiff was very familiar with the duties of clerk in the marshal's office, and that the said Hunter was wholly ignorant of the duties of said office; that the witness was desirous of having plaintiff employed as such clerk by said Hunter, and, with the plaintiff, went to the marshal's office and there met the said Hunter, and in said office, they there being present, they had a conversation about the employment of the plaintiff and the terms thereof; that witness told the said Hunter that he could find nobody who would suit the place better than the plaintiff; that Hunter said he did not know anything about the emoluments of the office, or the value of the plaintiff's services, but he would be willing to give him \$250 per annum; that witness said that was out of the question, that plaintiff could not pay his board with it; the witness then said he would give \$150, if Hunter would give \$250, making the salary \$400 for the first year; that said Hunter said he was willing to do that; that plaintiff was dissatisfied; that witness, then and there continuing the conversation, in the presence of the said Hunter, and speaking in the same tone as in the previous part of the conversation, and standing near to the said Hunter as before, told the plaintiff that he must try and get along with the \$400 for the first year, and that afterwards, when Hunter should ascertain the value of the services, he would pay him accordingly; that said Hunter made no comment on the last statement; that said plaintiff thereupon acquiesced, and entered upon the duties of said clerkship. And further proved by another witness that, during the said first year, the plaintiff complained to the witness of the insufficiency of the salary; that witness thereupon saw and had a conversation with Hunter on the subject; that he could not recollect the language of said Hunter, but it was to the effect that if he gave plaintiff more now he would waste it; and other remarks which he could not distinctly repeat, but all which left the clear impression on the \*mind of the witness that [\* 288]

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after the said first year the plaintiff was to be better compensated; that the witness reported the conversation to the plaintiff. Another witness, Smith Minor, a brother of the plaintiff, deposed that the witness had a conversation with Hunter in the year 1843 or 1844, in which he told Hunter that the plaintiff had not been to see witness for ten years; that the plaintiff had given as a reason that he could not get enough money from said Hunter to hire a horse to ride to the country, where witness resided, in Fairfax county, Virginia. That said Hunter spoke in the highest terms of the plaintiff's services, and of his integrity and industry; said that he owed his fortune to the plaintiff, and that plaintiff had made him from 70 to \$100,000, and other words to this effect; and said that he, Hunter, was keeping all he could back from the plaintiff for a rainy day, and to support him in his old age. And further proved by the evidence of Chief Judge Cranch, of Marshal Wallach, Marshal Hoover, and John A. Smith, clerk, and others, that the plaintiff's services were well worth the amount claimed, (to wit, \$800 per annum,) and by said ex-Marshal Wallach and Marshal Hoover, that they respectively paid plaintiff \$1,000 per annum for similar services, and for the discharge of the same duties which he had rendered and discharged in the time of their said predecessor, Hunter. And further gave evidence tending to show that the said office of marshal, during the time the said Hunter had held the same, was very profitable, and that said Hunter had amassed a considerable fortune therefrom."

An account was also given in evidence by which it appeared that Minor, as clerk, had for the first year credited payments at the specific sum of 400 dollars; but that, afterwards, the credits were at irregular intervals, and usually of small sums—sometimes covering 400 dollars in the year; but often falling short of this amount. The account has the appearance of an open and running account.

The court was asked to charge the jury, on part of the defendant, that if they believed the plaintiff entered on the service upon an agreement for 400 dollars' salary for that year, and continued in it from 1834 to 1848, and during all the time, from time to time, received from Hunter in full at that rate for the whole service, then the plaintiff is not entitled to recover. This instruction was given.

The principal instruction demanded and refused was, that there was no evidence legally competent from which the jury could infer that there was any agreement between Hunter and Minor, upon other terms than for the payment of the services at the rate of 400 dollars per annum.

## Kinsman v. Parkhurst.

Another instruction was asked and refused, assuming for the \* defendant that Minor was bound to give Hunter [ \* 289 ] notice that more than \$400 was claimed after the expiration of the first year, before he could be allowed a higher rate of compensation.

As the case depended on proof of a promise, (arising by implication,) on the fact that Hunter assented to the proposition made by Daniel Minor to the plaintiff below, no proof of further notice could be required; so that the controversy must be limited to the instruction first refused.

This instruction, if given, would have taken the case from the jury by rejecting the entire evidence as legally incompetent, except such as established the special contract.

There was evidence from which the jury might infer a promise on part of Hunter to further compensate Minor; and it was the duty of the circuit court to leave the fact to the jury: indeed, the first instruction which was given went to the limit of the court's power in its bearing on the facts; the jury being told that if they found the plaintiff was to receive 400 dollars for the first year's service, and had received at that rate for the whole period, then the plaintiff was not entitled to recover.

It is ordered that the judgment of the circuit court be affirmed.

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ISRAEL KINSMAN and another, Appellants, v. STEPHEN R. PARKHURST.

18 H. 289.

18h	289
L-ed	385
133	467

1. An agreement between a patentee and another person, by which the latter becomes part owner of the patent, and agrees to conduct exclusively the business of manufacturing the patented machines, is not void as in restraint of trade.
2. Nor can the party so manufacturing and selling, when called on for an account, deny the validity of the patent or the originality of the invention.
3. Nor can he set up a right to manufacture the patented article under a license from a third person.
4. Nor can he evade his obligation to his partner by a transfer of his right to another person by assignment.
5. Error or mistake in the report of a master in stating an account cannot be reversed on appeal, unless excepted to in the court below before confirmation.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the southern district of New York.

The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Kellar*, for appellants.

*Mr. Gifford*, for appellee.

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[ \* 290 ] \* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the southern district of New York, in a suit in equity brought by the appellee, Parkhurst, against the appellants. The bill states, and the proofs show, that Parkhurst,

being the owner of letters patent for improvements in  
[ \* 291 ] the \* machine for ginning cotton and wool, on the 22d of

May, 1845, entered into a written agreement with Kinsman, the substance of which was, that Parkhurst was to be the owner of two thirds, and Kinsman of one third, of the letters patent; that the business of manufacturing and selling the patented machines should be carried on by the parties on their joint account in the proportions of two thirds and one third, Kinsman giving his personal attention to the business, and advancing a sum not exceeding one thousand dollars for the purchase of machinery, stock, &c., for which advance he was to be repaid out of the first profits of the business. Kinsman was to pay Parkhurst two thousand dollars in cash, and give his note for one thousand dollars, payable in sixty days. Under this agreement, the manufacture and sales of the machines were begun and carried on until the 9th day of February, 1846, at which time the parties entered into a new agreement, the substantial part of which was as follows:

“Whereas the party of the first part has advanced moneys, and become responsible for various sums of money which have been expended in getting up machinery, and tools, and stock, &c., for the manufacture of burning and carding machines, which were invented by the said Parkhurst; one third part of which he sold and assigned to the party of the first part: Now, therefore, the party of the first part, in consideration of one dollar in hand paid by the party of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hereby covenants and agrees, that, as soon as the profits which have accrued, and which may hereafter arise, from the manufacture and sale of the said machines, so invented by the party of the second part, and so made and sold by the party of the first part, shall be sufficient to pay all legal demands for the purchase of machinery, tools, &c., &c., and other expenses incurred by said party of the first part, then he, the said party of the first part, shall and will discontinue the manufacture and sale of said machines, invented as aforesaid, and that all machines which he shall manufacture and sell after this date should not be sold for a less profit than one hundred dollars each, and that he will be accountable for one hundred dollars profit on each and every machine made and sold from this day, unless he has the

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written consent of the party of the second part to sell at a less price.”

“The party of the second part, in consideration of one dollar to him in hand paid by the party of the first part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and also in consideration of the agreements aforesaid, hereby covenants and agrees with the party of the first part, that he will go on and manufacture the machines aforesaid as soon as the party of the first part discontinues the same, and that he will not sell any machine for a less \*profit than one hundred dollars, without the written [ \* 292 ] consent of the party of the first part, and that he will pay over to the party of the first part one third part and share of the said profits upon all machines which he makes and sells hereafter, and that, for any machines which he may manufacture, or have manufactured, before the discontinuing of the building of the same by the party of the first part, shall be subject to the same restrictions of selling for at least one hundred dollars profit on each machine, one third of which shall be paid to the party of the first part.”

The original and supplemental bills aver, that under this agreement Kinsman prosecuted the business, and not only reimbursed himself for the cost of the machinery, tools, &c., and all his other advances, but, in violation of his agreement, continued the manufacture and sale of the machines, so as to receive large profits, of which it prays an account, and also an injunction to restrain the further making or vending of the machines in violation of the agreement. A temporary injunction was applied for and obtained on the third day of July, 1847. On the 29th day of June, 1847, Kinsman made a transfer to the appellant, Goddard, who was then a clerk in his employment, of the tools, stock, &c., used in the manufacture; and, after Kinsman was enjoined, the business was carried on in Goddard's name. A supplemental bill was then filed, making Goddard a party, charging him with notice of all the complainant's rights at the time of the transfer to him, alleging the transfer itself to have been only colorable, and praying an account and decree as against him and Kinsman. The circuit court made an interlocutory decree declaring Parkhurst's right to an account, referring the cause to a master, to take and state the accounts, directing the master, in taking the accounts, to ascertain and report the number of machines made and sold by Kinsman and Goddard, or either of them; the advances made by Kinsman and Goddard, or either of them; and charging a profit of one hundred dollars on each machine sold.



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The master reported ; and his report, not being excepted to, was confirmed, and a final decree made, that Kinsman and Goddard should pay to the complainant the amount reported by the master to be due from them. From this decree the appeal now before us was taken.

The principal objection made by the appellants to the decree of the court below is, that Parkhurst was not the original and first inventor of the thing patented. We are not satisfied that this is made out. But we have not found it necessary to come to a decided opinion upon this point, because we are all of opinion that, under the agreement of the ninth of February, [ \* 293 ] \* 1846, the invalidity of the patent would not afford a bar to the complainant's right to an account. Having actually received profits from sales of the patented machine, which profits the defendants do not show have been or are in any way liable to be affected by the invalidity of the patent, its validity is immaterial. Moreover, we think the defendants are estopped from alleging that invalidity. They have made and sold these machines under the complainant's title, and for his account; and they can no more be allowed to deny that title and retain the profits to their own use, than an agent, who has collected a debt for his principal, can insist on keeping the money, upon an allegation that the debt was not justly due.

The invalidity of the patent does not render the sales of the machine illegal, so as to taint with illegality the obligation of the defendants to account. Even where money has been received, either by an agent or a joint owner, by force of a contract which was illegal, the agent or joint owner cannot protect himself from accounting for what was so received, by setting up the illegality of the transaction in which it was paid to him. Thus where a vessel engaged in an illegal trade carried freight which came into the hands of one of the part owners, and on a bill filed by the other part owner for an account, the defendant relied on the illegality of the trade, but it was held to be no defense. *Sharp v. Taylor*, 2 Phil. Ch. R. 801. So in *Tenant v. Elliot*, 1 B. & P. 3, the defendant, an insurance broker, having effected an illegal insurance for the plaintiff, and received the amount of a loss, endeavored to defend against the claim of his principal by showing the illegality of the insurance, but the plaintiff recovered. See also *McBlair v. Gibbes*, 17 How. 236.

Here, however, as already observed, there was no illegality; it is simply a question of failure of title, and as that does not appear in any manner to have affected the profits which the defendants

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received, there can be no ground to allow it to be shown in defense. *Bartlett, ad'r, v. Holbrook*, 1 Gray's R. 114; *Wilder v. Adams*, 2 Wood. & Minot, 329, are in point.

Similar views are decisive against the objection that this was a contract in restraint of trade. It was certainly competent for two persons, being joint owners of letters patent, whether valid or invalid, to enter into a copartnership for the manufacture and sale of the patented machines, and to stipulate that one of them should alone conduct the business. This was a provision for the prosecution of the business in a particular mode, and not for its restraint. It is a very common and not an illegal stipulation in partnership articles, that neither partner shall carry on that business for which the partnership is formed, outside of the partnership and for his own account. Besides, if the contract \* to refrain from the manufacture could not be enforced, [ \* 294 ] as being against public policy, this would afford no answer to a claim for an account of profits actually realized by prosecuting the business, there being no connection between the illegal stipulation and the profits of the business.

It was insisted by the appellants that they did not act under the complainant's title, but under some right acquired from one Sargent. We are not satisfied that Sargent had even an inchoate right to a patent for the machines which the appellants made and sold. But even if he had, the defendant, Kinsman, could not secretly acquire the outstanding right of Sargent, if any, and set it up against his joint owner, Parkhurst, in derogation of his rights under the agreement of the 9th of February, which Kinsman entered into with knowledge of this alleged title of Sargent; and Goddard is bound by the same equities, for he not only purchased *pendente lite*, and with actual notice of the suit, but we are satisfied the sale to him was made to enable Kinsman to attempt to evade the injunction.

The appellant, Goddard, objects that he has been charged by the final decree, jointly with Kinsman, for the profits on sales of machines made before the transfer to him by Kinsman. If this be so, it arises from the report of the master, who was directed by the interlocutory decree to report the sales made by Kinsman and Goddard, or either of them, and the advances and expenditures of them, or either of them.

If his report was in this or any other particular erroneous, it was incumbent on the defendants to have pointed out the error by an exception filed pursuant to the rules of the court on that subject. But no exception was filed, the report was confirmed, and the final

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decree was drawn up and entered without objection by the appellant, Goddard, reciting that it appears by the report of the master that the sum of \$23,220<sup>28</sup>/<sub>100</sub> is due and owing by Kinsman and Goddard to Parkhurst, and thereupon proceeds to decree them to pay that sum. When a motion to dismiss the appeal was made at a former day, on the ground that the master's report not having been excepted to, and the appellants not having objected to the final decree, there was nothing open on this appeal, the appellants' counsel declared that the appeal was designed only to review the interlocutory decree which had decided the merits of the cause, and that, unless error was found therein, there was no ground for the appeal. The motion to dismiss the appeal was overruled, the court being of opinion that it was open to the appellants to review the decision made by the interlocutory decree. But the interlocutory decree does not direct the master to charge Goddard and Kinsman jointly with profits on sales made by Kinsman alone. If [ \* 295 ] the master \* put such an interpretation on the decree, it was an erroneous interpretation, and should have been brought before the court below by an exception. It is too late to object to it here, for the first time.

The appellants also insist that they were charged with profits not actually received, by reason of the failure of the purchasers to pay, and other causes. But this was in accordance with the agreement of the 9th of February, which stipulates that Kinsman shall be accountable for one hundred dollars profit on each machine made and sold by him. By force of this stipulation, he and Goddard, who acted with him under this agreement, took the risk of bad debts. It appears, from the master's report, that evidence, tending to show that some of these losses were attributable to the interference of Parkhurst, was offered to the master and rejected by him. But, no exception having been taken to bring this point before the circuit court, it is not open here.

We have considered all the objections to the decree of the circuit court, and, finding them untenable, we order the decree to be affirmed, with damages and costs.

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Ransom v. Winn.

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JAMES L. RANSOM, Appellant, v. WILLIAM WINN and others.

18 H. 295.

PRACTICE IN CHANCERY.

1. Where a chancery suit involves complicated accounts, it should be referred to a master, and objections to his report should be made by exceptions in the court below.
2. A petition filed in the court below to be made party to a chancery suit already pending, cannot be sustained in this court, unless the record of the original suit is before it. The appellant's petition in such case will be dismissed without prejudice.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the District of Columbia, and the matter decided is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. W. S. Cox*, for appellant.

*Mr. Davis*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 296 ]

This is an appeal from the circuit court of the United States for the District of Columbia.

The proceedings on which the appeal was taken were had on a petition of the appellant, Ransom, in the circuit court of the District, stating that he was the creditor of the intestate for \$8,113.48, a balance due on merchandise furnished, and other matters of account. An account was filed with the petition, showing the items charged, and he prayed to be made a party in a suit pending; and he adopts the allegations and prayers of the bill, and calls upon the defendants to answer, &c.

No answer was filed by the defendants, nor does any part of the original bill to which reference is made, or any proceeding in that suit, appear on the record.

An account is stated of the value of produce purchased by Ransom, and forwarded to Thomas J. Davis, and priced as of the 28th May, 1847, which, in the whole, amounted to \$31,879.80. The entire expenditure in purchasing the produce, including losses, amounted to the sum of \$21,280.43, leaving a profit of \$10,599.37. A further account is stated in detail of purchases of grain amounting to a large sum. An auditor was appointed by the court, who, in a long report, states the correspondence between Ransom and Davis, which conduces to show that Ransom was engaged in purchasing wheat and other grain, to be forwarded to Davis, who owned a mill in Georgetown. Exceptions were taken to the report of the auditor, and the court ordered that the cause be again referred to him, with instructions to take such testimony as may

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be offered by Ransom, on the points mentioned in his affidavit filed in the cause; and that he report to this court, as soon as convenient, the substance of such testimony, and what changes, if any, such additional testimony may render proper in the report heretofore made by said auditor in reference to said claim.

The auditor returned the additional testimony which he took, but made no alteration in his former report. It was admitted in the argument that the estate of Davis was insolvent, and the object of Ransom seemed to be, to enforce his claim against the estate of Davis in preference to other creditors.

From the record, the nature of the suit, in which Ransom prayed to become a party, does not appear. It may have been a suit by other creditors, but no notice is taken of them in the subsequent proceeding, nor is there any pleading except the petition to be made a party. This proceeding is irregular, and cannot be sustained. The exceptions to the report of the auditor were overruled by the circuit court, and the petition of Ransom was dismissed.

[ \* 297 ] \* Where a chancery suit involves matters of account, the action of a master should be had in the inferior court, and the items admitted or rejected should be stated, so that exception may be taken to the particular items or class of items, and such a case should be brought before this court on the rulings of the exceptions by the circuit court.

The bill is dismissed at the plaintiff's costs, without prejudice.

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DOE, *ex dem.* JAMES B. MCCALL and others, Plaintiff in Error, *v.*  
WILLARD CARPENTER and JOHN A. REITZ.

18 H. 297.

DECREE IN PARTITION—NON RESIDENTS—INFANT HEIRS.

In an action of ejectment, plaintiffs having proved title in their ancestor to one undivided fourth of the premises in suit, were met by a deed from their ancestor conveying the property under a partition decree, to which his vendee and plaintiffs were parties. They offered to prove that the deed from their father was obtained by fraud, and that he was of unsound mind when it was made. Held, that they were not estopped from proving this by the decree of partition—

1. Because the nature of the partition suit did not involve the validity of conveyance of their ancestor, and no judgment was therefore passed on the matter now set up to defeat that deed.
2. Because the decree of partition, however it might affect a separation of interests, was not binding on plaintiffs, (who were non-residents, and never appeared or were served with process within the jurisdiction of the court,) as to the title to said property.

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3. Recitals in the deeds of partition made by a commissioner under the decree of the court can have no more effect than the decree of the court itself.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the district of Indiana.  
The case is sufficiently stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Dunn*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Baker*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 298 ]

This is a writ of error to the circuit court of the United States for the district of Indiana.

The suit in the court below was an action of ejectment by the plaintiffs to recover the possession of certain town lots in the city of Lamasco. They proved on the trial that their father, James B. McCall, was the owner of an undivided fourth \* of [ \* 299 ] a certain part of said city, and had been in the possession of the same, and died in 1840; and that they were his heirs at law.

The defendant set up, in bar of the action, certain proceedings in partition, embracing the premises in question, in the circuit court of the fourth judicial district of Indiana.

The bill in partition was filed by the tenants in common of the town lots with McCall in his lifetime, against his children and heirs, the present plaintiffs. The two sons were non-residents of the State at the time, and did not appear or answer to the bill. The daughter was a resident of the State, and was served personally with the subpoena. She and the younger brother were under age, for whom guardians *ad litem* were appointed by the court.

The bill, after setting out the interests of the respective tenants in common, and that partition had been agreed upon between them, describing particularly the manner in which the partition was to be made, and the portions assigned to each in the arrangement, charges, that after the agreement, J. B. McCall sold and conveyed all his undivided interest, to wit, one undivided fourth part of the town property, to Hugh Stewart for the sum of \$11,500, and that shortly afterwards, and before he executed deeds of partition, according to the agreement, departed this life, leaving three children, his heirs at law, James B. McCall, non-resident of this State, and Henry McCall, also a non-resident, and Mary S. McCall, who are infants under the age of twenty-one years. The bill further charges, that the several proprietors, including Stewart, the grantee of McCall, had already interchanged deeds of partition, according to the agreement, or were ready to do so; and that they were ready to execute



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to the heirs deeds of all their right to subdivision Nos. 3 and 6 of the southeast quarter of section twenty-three, in town. 6, and of all other portions to which the heirs were entitled; and then closes by stating that, inasmuch as your orators are unable to obtain relief in the premises, except by an interposition of the court of chancery, they, for the purpose of perfecting their several titles to their respective portions of said property, pursuant to the agreement in partition, pray that the heirs be made defendants; that a guardian *ad litem* be appointed for the two infant heirs, that they may answer the bill; and if the same should be found true, that the court would appoint three commissioners to make deeds of partition, &c.

The bill was taken as confessed against the adult heir, and against the others upon the answer put in by the guardian; no proof, for aught that appears, having been given. The court decreed that the prayer of the complainants be granted; [ \* 300 ] and \* that C. D. Bourne, C. Baker, and J. E. Blythe be commissioners to make deeds, &c., to the complainants, agreeably to the partition mentioned in the bill, and pursuant to, and agreeable with the said sale and conveyance made by James B. McCall, deceased, of his undivided interest in said town property, to the complainant, Hugh Stewart.

Deeds were executed in pursuance of the directions in the decree, and reported to the court and confirmed.

It appeared that McCall, besides being a joint owner in the town property which he had conveyed to Stewart, also owned, jointly with the complainants, (except Stewart,) one-fourth of the southeast quarter of section No. 23, township 6, adjoining the town, and which descended to his heirs and was embraced in the bill of partition.

The counsel for the plaintiffs, when this record of partition was offered in evidence by the defendants, objected to the admission, on the ground that the decree was void for want of jurisdiction of the court; and also for fraud apparent on the face of the proceedings. The objection was overruled. It appeared that the defendants claim title from Stewart, the grantee of McCall.

They then rested, and the counsel for the plaintiffs then produced and read the conveyance from their father to Stewart mentioned in the bill of partition, and offered to prove that the conveyance was obtained by fraud on the part of Stewart, and also that, at the time of its execution, their father was of unsound mind and incapable of making a valid contract; that said unsoundness was well known to Stewart, and that he took advantage of it in obtaining the deed; that the consideration of \$11,500 mentioned was never paid; that

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\$6,000 in depreciated State scrip was all that was ever paid or agreed to be paid, and that the defendants purchased of Stewart with full knowledge of all the facts; that the real estate purported to be conveyed by the deed was worth at the time at least \$20,000.

To all which evidence the defendant's counsel objected, on the sole ground that the plaintiffs were barred by the record of the proceedings in partition, which objection was sustained by the court, and the evidence excluded.

The jury, under the direction of the court, rendered a verdict for the defendants.

We think the court erred in excluding this evidence.

The binding effect of the decree, in the chancery suit, is sought to be maintained upon the ground that the proceedings were instituted not only for the purpose of making partition, but also to quiet the title between the parties, and especially the title of Stewart under the conveyance from McCall, and that the \*children and heirs were made parties for this reason, [ \* 301 ] and that the proceedings in this aspect, being in the nature of proceedings *in rem*, would operate upon the title and bind the heirs, whether they appeared or not, if notice had been given in conformity with the statute or law of the State.

But we think the obvious answer to this view is, that the bill has not been framed in any such aspect, or for any such purpose, either in the body of it or in the prayer. There is no suggestion of any imperfection in the title of Stewart, under the deed of McCall, or of any imputation or questioning of the genuineness or validity of it; nor does the prayer ask for a decree to confirm the deed or the title to Stewart.

The only pretext for the ground now taken to bind the heirs, is in the allegation as follows, namely: "As your orators are unable to obtain relief in the premises, except by the interposition of a court of chancery, they, for the purpose of perfecting their several titles to the respective portions of said property, agreeably with and in pursuance of said agreement or partition, would respectively pray, &c.," and then follows the prayer for partition.

Now, it is manifest that this allegation refers simply to the subject of providing for the mutual releases or conveyances of the joint interest in the property, so that each might become vested, severally, with the title to his respective share, and nothing beyond this, as is further evinced by the prayer of the bill, which is, that if the allegations in the bill should be found true, not that Stewart should be quieted in his title under McCall, but that three commissioners be appointed to make the partition, &c. So in respect

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to the decree. It simply orders that the prayer of the bill of the complainants be granted, appoints the commissioners, and directs them to make the partition, by the execution of the deeds of conveyance, release, and partition to the complainants, according to their respective rights, &c.

The deeds of the commissioners have also been referred to as helping out the binding effect claimed for these proceedings.

The deed of the commissioners to Stewart may be taken as a sample of all of them. It recites their appointment, the object of it, to wit, execute the partition deeds, &c., and adds: "and to perfect the title of said Hugh Stewart to the interest heretofore conveyed to him in said property, by the said McCall in his lifetime,"—they then go on and convey "all the right, title and interest, claim and demand whatsoever of the said James B. McCall, deceased, at the time of his death, and of his heirs, naming the three defendants, since his decease, or at any other time, and of all or any other heirs or heir whatsoever, of the [ \* 302 ] said \* James B. McCall, deceased," &c.; seeking to bind those not made defendants as well as those who were.

The answer to all these recitals is, that they have no binding force or effect beyond what is derived from the decree of the court appointing the commissioners; and as that simply conferred authority on them to execute mutual conveyances and releases for the purpose of making partition between the parties, any recital going beyond this is nugatory. Neither should the simple confirmation of the deeds by the court be construed as intending to go beyond the terms and directions of the decree.

The case, then, is brought down to the question, so far as the effect and operation of the chancery suit are concerned, whether or not these defendants are estopped by the decree from impeaching the deed of their father to Stewart. And, in respect to this question, we may concede that, for the purposes of partition, the court, under the statute and law of Indiana, had jurisdiction of the subject-matter and were competent to make the partition.

The point is, whether or not the right of the plaintiffs to impeach this deed was involved in these proceedings, so as to be deemed *res judicata*, and all further examination or inquiry foreclosed.

As we have already seen, the question as to its validity was not presented upon the pleadings in that suit, nor did it become the subject of inquiry or examination in the course of the proceeding, nor did it enter into the decree of the court in the determination of the case. And the better opinion is, that no such question could have been raised by the defendants in that proceeding, if they had

sought to invalidate the deed. The most that the court would have been justified in doing, in the usual course of proceeding, would have been to have stayed the suit in partition till the question could have been settled at law. The proceedings in partition are not appropriate for a litigation between parties in respect to the title.

As to the binding effect of judgments or decrees, the general rule is, that the judgments of courts of concurrent jurisdiction are not admissible in a subsequent suit, unless they are upon the same matter, and directly on the point; when the same matter is directly in question, and the judgment in the former suit upon the point, it will then be as a plea, a bar, or as evidence, conclusive between the parties. 2 Philips Ev. 13. So a judgment is conclusive upon a matter legitimately within the issue, and necessarily involved in the decision. 4 Cow. 559; 8 Wend. 9; C. & H. notes, part 2, note 22.

Testing the case by this principle, it seems quite clear that the proceedings in partition constituted no defense to this \*action; no question was made upon the deed by the [\*303] pleadings, nor any judgment given upon it; nor was any such question necessarily involved in the partition suit.

Besides, two of the defendants, plaintiffs here, were non-residents of the State, and neither appeared, nor were served personally with process. As to them, the proceedings were purely *in rem*, and the decree acted only upon the *res* or subject-matter. And, as to the subject-matter, the bill on its face shows, that these two plaintiffs had no interest in or connection with the partition, except as respected the southeast quarter of section twenty-three. This tract was not included in the deed to Stewart, and of course descended to the heirs. Being tenants in common with the complainants, the decree of partition might operate upon it and bind them. But, as to the premises now in dispute it could have no effect, as it appears, by the averment of complainants themselves, the defendants had no interest in it. The title was in Stewart. The decree, therefore, operating simply *in rem*, could only operate upon such interest or estate of the defendant as was shown in the bill, and properly the subject of the partition against them. Beyond this, it was ineffectual, either as to its direct operation, or when in question collaterally.

Proceedings of this character are allowed to conclude the rights of the absent party, only as it respects property, whether real or personal, involved in the suit, the property of the party proceeded against. They act upon the thing, and bind the party in respect

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to it. Now, that in this case, so far as the two non-resident defendants were concerned, was their interest in the southeast quarter of section twenty-three? They were strangers as regarded any other piece or parcel of land involved in the proceedings.

Then, as to Mary, the daughter, the process was served personally upon her; she was an infant, and appeared by a guardian *ad litem*. But this was simply an appearance, as the representative of her interest in the undivided parcel which had descended to the heirs. The bill shows that she had no interest in the partition, except as to this: all the other parcels of which partition was sought belonged to other parties, and concerned them alone; as to these, John Doe might have been made a party with as much propriety as this defendant. It may be, as we have already said, that these proceedings conclude the question of partition from afterwards being agitated, a question which it is not now necessary to decide; but we think it clear that they cannot conclude the title even of a party to them, whom the proceedings themselves show had no interest or concern in the question of partition.

[ \* 304 ] \* Upon the whole, after the best consideration we have been able to bestow upon the case, we think the court erred in excluding the evidence offered to impeach the deed of McCall to Stewart, and that the judgment below should be reversed, and a *venire de novo* awarded.

Mr. Justice Daniel and Mr. Justice Campbell dissented.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL. The circuit court of Vanderburgh county, Indiana, exercising chancery jurisdiction, in 1842, pronounced a decree, appointing three commissioners to make deeds of conveyance, release, and partition to the plaintiffs in the suit, of certain lots in the town of Lamasco, in that county, and which embrace the land included in this suit, according to an agreement for a partition made by a portion of the plaintiffs and James B. McCall, the ancestor of the lessors of the plaintiff in this cause, and also of a sale and conveyance by him to one Stewart of his undivided interest in the property, and directed that the deeds should convey the fee-simple to the complainants respectively.

The deeds were executed by the commissioners, were reported to the court, and were confirmed by an order.

This decree was rendered in a chancery cause, prosecuted by persons who had held in common the site of the town of Lamasco with McCall, and who had entered into the agreement, by which specified lots were set apart to each of the tenants, and for which mutual

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conveyances were to be made, and one Stewart, on whose behalf it was alleged that, after the agreement, and before deeds were made, McCall had sold and conveyed to him his entire undivided interest in the tract.

The object of the bill was to perfect in the complainants, according to the agreement of partition and the sale and conveyance to Stewart, their titles. One of the children of McCall was served with process, and two were called in by publication, and a guardian *ad litem* was appointed for the minors. The prayer of the bill was for the appointment of commissioners to make the conveyances according to the agreement and the sale.

The defendants claiming to hold the lands under these complainants, offered the record of the proceedings in evidence upon the trial in the circuit court, which was opposed, for the reason that the court had no jurisdiction, and for fraud, apparent on the face of the bill, the evidence was admitted as conclusive of the title, and an issue was formed on the bill of exceptions for this court.

The decree operates upon a title to lands within the county \*and State where the circuit court, that rendered [ \* 305 ] it, was held. That court possesses, under the constitution and laws of Indiana, a general chancery jurisdiction, and a special authority to appoint commissioners to execute decrees like the present. One of the defendants was before the court by process, and was defended by a guardian, and the others by publication, according to the authorized practice of that court. This being the state of the record—the jurisdiction of the court spreading over the subject-matter, and embracing the parties—the inquiry arises, on what principle can its authority be impeached in a collateral proceeding? It is said, that, it being apparent from the bill that James B. McCall had sold his entire interest in the town of Lamasco to Stewart, that Stewart might have completed his agreement for a partition, and that the heirs of McCall, having inherited no estate, were not proper parties to the bill, and that the deeds of conveyance, release, and partition, under the decree, did not conclude their rights. But who is to decide whether they were proper parties to the bill, and whether it was proper to terminate all contest upon the title, by requiring them to release their rights, whatever they might happen to be to the plaintiffs? Upon whom was the duty devolved by the constitution and laws of Indiana, to determine whether the bill was framed according to the course of chancery practice, and the decree a proper expression of chancery jurisprudence? Certainly not this court, nor the circuit court of the United States for Indiana.



A court of the State of Indiana, with a plenary jurisdiction in chancery, having the subject-matter and parties within that jurisdiction, has pronounced the decree, from whence comes the power of this court to pronounce its jurisdiction usurped, and its decree a nullity? This court, of old, was accustomed to say, "that a judgment or execution irreversible by a superior court, cannot be declared a nullity by any authority of law, if it has been rendered by a court of competent jurisdiction of the parties and the subject-matter with authority to use the process it has issued; it must remain the only test of the respective rights of the parties to it." And also, "the line which separates error in judgment from the usurpation of power is very definite, and is precisely that which denotes the cases where a judgment or decree is reversible only by an appellate court, or may be declared a nullity collaterally, when it is offered in evidence in an action concerning the matter adjudicated, or purporting to have been so. In the one case it is a record imputing absolute verity; in the other, mere waste paper. 10 Pet. 449.

We have only now to ascertain the extent of the jurisdiction of courts of chancery in the matters of partition, and to quiet title by removing dormant equities, and the effect of decrees [ \* 306 ] in \* such cases. The first branch of the inquiry is satisfactorily answered by Judge Story. "In all cases of partition," he says, "a court of equity does not act merely in a ministerial character and in obedience to the call of the parties who have a right to the partition, but it founds itself upon its general jurisdiction as a court of equity, and administers it relief *ex æquo et bono*, according to its own notions of general justice and equity between the parties. It will, therefore, by its decree, adjust all the equitable rights of the parties interested in the estate, and courts of equity, in making these adjustments, will not confine themselves to the mere legal rights of the original tenants in common, but will have regard to the legal and equitable rights of all other parties interested in the estate, which have been derived from any of the original tenants in common."

Such being the enlarged jurisdiction upon the subject-matter, the question arises as to the effect of the decrees upon the titles that are, or might have been, involved in a suit of that nature.

In *Reese v. Holmes*, 5 Rich. Eq. 531, the court determined that the parties to such a record were concluded by the decree from showing that they had a greater estate than, or one derived from a different source from, that set out in the proceedings and established by the decree.

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Lessee of McCall v. Carpenter.

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The court said, if any relievable fraud or mistake entered into the decree when it was pronounced, the party affected by it might have been heard, if he had come within a reasonable time, with a direct proceeding to set the proceeding aside; but while it stands, it is the standard to which every party taking under it must resort for the measure of his rights, and cannot be set aside or modified collaterally." In *Stewart v. Migell*, 8 Ind. Eq. 242, the court decide that a bill cannot be supported to set aside a decree formerly made between parties, though it be alleged that the facts found by the court did not exist; and that the decree was conclusive, in respect to the thing which the parties had, or admitted, or it was declared they had, and also in respect to the share to which each was entitled in severalty, and to the parcel so allotted. In *Mills v. Witherington*, 2 Dev. & B. 433, where land belonging to one in severalty was included in the petition as land held in common, and allotted to another in severalty, it was held, in an action of ejectment, that the lessor of the plaintiff, who had been a party to the judgment, "was concluded, bound, and estopped, to controvert anything contained in it." In *Clapp v. Bromagham*, 9 Cowen, 537, the court say, "that the judgment in partition, it is true, does not change the possession, but it establishes the title, and in an ejectment must be conclusive." 1 Md. Ch. Dec. 455; 14 Geo. 521; 17 Vesey, 355; 29 Maine, 128.

\* I do not consider it necessary to inquire, whether the [\* 307] fact of an absolute sale and a perfect conveyance by McCall to Stewart did not relieve the heirs from the duty of completing the agreement of their ancestor; nor do I consider it necessary to inquire whether, having such a sale and conveyance, Stewart had a good case to go into chancery to cut off possible but unpublished equities; nor do I consider it necessary to inquire whether there was sufficient or any evidence to support the decree. Those questions were all subject to the jurisdiction of the circuit court of Vanderburgh county, and might have been revised in the supreme court of Indiana.

Those courts had entire jurisdiction of the parties and the cause, and its decree cannot be collaterally impeached. I am authorized to say that Mr. Justice DANIEL concurs in this opinion.

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*Ex parte Wells.*

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*Ex parte WILLIAM WELLS, ON A PETITION FOR A WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS.*

18 H. 307.

## PARDONING POWER OF THE PRESIDENT.

1. The constitution confers on the president the power to "grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment."
2. In order to ascertain clearly what is meant by this grant of power, recourse must be had to the use of the power, and the meaning of those words as exercised in England under the common law. The court goes into an elaborate examination of the English precedents and authorities.
3. It includes the right to commute the sentence of the court by substituting a milder punishment, as imprisonment for death; and acceptance of such a pardon binds the convict as to the substituted punishment.

THIS was a petition to the supreme court by William Wells.

His petition showed that he had been convicted in the circuit court for the District of Columbia of murder, and sentenced to death; that the president had granted him a conditional pardon, namely, that he should be imprisoned for life, instead of being hung, and that under duress he had accepted this condition. He alleged that the condition was void, and that he was illegally restrained of his liberty, and that the circuit court, to which he had applied, after granting a writ of habeas corpus, remanded him to prison on inquiring into his case. He prayed for the writ, and to be discharged by this court.

The question of the jurisdiction of this court was raised, and Justices CURTIS and CAMPBELL held there was none, dissenting in this from the remainder of the court.

*Mr. Charles Lee Jones*, for petitioner.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, *contra*.

[ \* 308 ] \* Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court.

The petitioner was convicted of murder in the District of Columbia, and sentenced to be hung on the 23d of April, 1852. President Fillmore granted to him a conditional pardon. The material part of it is as follows: "For divers good and sufficient reasons I have granted, and do hereby grant unto him, the said William Wells, a pardon of the offense of which he was convicted—upon condition that he be imprisoned during his natural life; that is, the sentence of death is hereby commuted to imprisonment for life in the penitentiary of Washington." On the same day the pardon was accepted in these words: "I hereby accept the above and within pardon, with condition annexed."

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An application was made by the petitioner to the circuit court \* of the District of Columbia for a writ of *habeas* [ \* 309 ] *corpus*. It was rejected, and is now before this court by way of appeal.

The second article of the constitution of the United States, section two, contains this provision: "The president shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment."

Under this power, the president has granted reprieves and pardons since the commencement of the present government. Sundry provisions have been enacted, regulating its exercise for the army and navy, in virtue of the constitutional power of congress to make rules and regulations for the government of the army and navy. No statute has ever been passed regulating it in cases of conviction by the civil authorities. In such cases, the president has acted exclusively under the power as it is expressed in the constitution.

This case raises the question, whether the president can constitutionally grant a conditional pardon to a convicted murderer, sentenced to be hung, offering to change that punishment to imprisonment for life; and if he does, and it be accepted by the convict, whether it is not binding upon him, to justify a court to refuse him a writ of *habeas corpus*, applied for upon the ground that the pardon is absolute, and the condition of it void.

The counsel for the prisoner contends that the pardon is valid, to remit entirely the sentence of the court for his execution, and that the condition annexed to the pardon, and accepted by the prisoner, is illegal. It is also said that a president granting such a pardon assumes a power not conferred by the constitution—that he legislates a new punishment into existence, and sentences the convict to suffer it; in this way violating the legislative and judicial powers of the government, it being the province of the first, to enact laws for the punishment of offenses against the United States, and that of the judiciary, to sentence convicts for violations of those laws; according to them. It is said to be the exercise of prerogative, such as the king of England has in such cases; and that, under our system, there can be no other foundation, empowering a president of the United States to show the same clemency.

We think this is a mistake arising from the want of due consideration of the legal meaning of the word pardon. It is supposed that it was meant to be used exclusively with reference to an absolute pardon, exempting a criminal from the punishment which the law inflicts for a crime he has committed.

But such is not the sense or meaning of the word, either in com-

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mon parlance or in law. In the first, it is forgiveness, release, remission. Forgiveness for an offense, whether it be one for which the person committing it is liable in law or otherwise. [ \* 310 ] \* Release from pecuniary obligation, as where it is said, I pardon you your debt. Or it is the remission of a penalty, to which one may have subjected himself by the non-performance of an undertaking or contract, or when a statutory penalty in money has been incurred, and it is remitted by a public functionary having power to remit it.

In the law it has different meanings, which were as well understood when the constitution was made as any other legal word in the constitution now is.

Such a thing as a pardon without a designation of its kind is not known in the law. Time out of mind, in the earliest books of the English law, every pardon has its particular denomination. They are general, special or particular, conditional or absolute, statutory, not necessary in some cases, and in some grantable of course. Sometimes, though, an express pardon for one is a pardon for another, such as in approver and appellee, principal and accessory in certain cases, or where many are indicted for felony in the same indictment, because the felony is several in all of them, and not joint, and the pardon for one of them is a pardon for all, though they may not be mentioned in it; or it discharges sureties for a fine, payable at a certain day, and the king pardons the principal; or sureties for the peace, if the principal is pardoned after forfeiture. We might mention other legal incidents of a pardon, but those mentioned are enough to illustrate the subject of pardon, and the extent or meaning of the president's power to grant reprieves and pardons. It meant that the power was to be used according to law; that is, as it had been used in England, and these States when they were colonies; not because it was a prerogative power, but as incidents of the power to pardon, particularly when the circumstances of any case disclosed such uncertainties as made it doubtful if there should have been a conviction of the criminal, or when they are such as to show that there might be a mitigation of the punishment without lessening the obligation of vindictory justice. Without such a power of clemency, to be exercised by some department or functionary of a government, it would be most imperfect and deficient in its political morality, and in that attribute of deity whose judgments are always tempered with mercy. And it was with the fullest knowledge of the law upon the subject of pardons, and the philosophy of government in its bearing upon the constitution, when this court instructed Chief Justice Marshall

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to say, in *The United States v. Wilson*, 7 Pet. 162: "As the power has been exercised from time immemorial by the executive of that nation whose language is our language, and to whose judicial institutions ours bear a close resemblance, we adopt their principles respecting the operation \* and effect of a par- [ \* 311 ] don, and look into their books for the rules prescribing the manner in which it is to be used by the person who would avail himself of it." We still think so, and that the language used in the constitution, conferring the power to grant reprieves and pardons, must be construed with reference to its meaning at the time of its adoption. At the time of our separation from Great Britain, that power had been exercised by the king, as the chief executive. Prior to the revolution, the colonies, being in effect under the laws of England, were accustomed to the exercise of it in the various forms, as they may be found in the English law books. They were, of course, to be applied as occasions occurred, and they constituted a part of the jurisprudence of Anglo-America. At the time of the adoption of the constitution, American statesmen were conversant with the laws of England, and familiar with the prerogatives exercised by the crown. Hence, when the words to grant pardons were used in the constitution, they conveyed to the mind the authority as exercised by the English crown, or by its representatives in the colonies. At that time both Englishmen and Americans attached the same meaning to the word pardon. In the convention which framed the constitution, no effort was made to define or change its meaning, although it was limited in cases of impeachment.

We must then give the word the same meaning as prevailed here and in England at the time it found a place in the constitution. This is in conformity with the principles laid down by this court in *Cathcart v. Robinson*, 5 Pet. 264, 280; and in *Flavel's case*, 8 Watts & Sargent, 197; Attorney General's brief.

A pardon is said by Lord Coke to be a work of mercy, whereby the king, either before attainder, sentence, or conviction, or after, forgiveth any crime, offense, punishment, execution, right, title, debt, or duty, temporal or ecclesiastical, (3 Inst. 233.) And the king's coronation oath is, "that he will cause justice to be executed in mercy." It is frequently conditional, as he may extend his mercy upon what terms he pleases, and annex to his bounty a condition precedent or subsequent, on the performance of which the validity of the pardon will depend, (Co. Litt. 274, 276; 2 Hawkins Ch. 37, § 45; 4 Black. Com. 401.) And if the felon does not perform the condition of the pardon, it will be altogether void; and



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he may be brought to the bar and remanded, to suffer the punishment to which he was originally sentenced. Cole's case, Moore, 466; Bac. Abr., Pardon, E. In the case of Packer and others—Canadian prisoners—5 Meeson & Welsby, 32, Lord Abinger decided for the court, if the condition upon which alone the [ \* 312 ] pardon was granted be void, the pardon \* must also be void. If the condition were lawful, but the prisoner did not assent to it, nor submit to be transported, he cannot have the benefit of the pardon—or if, having assented to it, his assent be revocable, we must consider him to have retracted it by the application to be set at liberty, in which case he is equally unable to avail himself of the pardon.

But to the power of pardoning there are limitations. The king cannot, by any previous license, make an offense dispunishable which is *malum in se*, i. e. unlawful in itself, as being against the law of nature, or so far against the public good as to be indictable at common law. A grant of this kind would be against reason and the common good, and therefore void, (2 Hawk. C. 37, § 28.) So he cannot release a recognizance to keep the peace with another by name, and generally with other lieges of the king, because it is for the benefit and safety of all his subjects, (3 Inst. 238.) Nor, after suit has been brought in a popular action, can the king discharge the informer's part of the penalty, (3 Inst. 238;) and if the action be given to the party grieved, the king cannot discharge the same, (3 Inst. 237.) Nor can the king pardon for a common nuisance, because it would take away the means of compelling a redress of it, unless it be in a case where the fine is to the king, and not a forfeiture to the party grieved. Hawk. C. 37, § 33; 5 Chit. Burn. 2.

And this power to pardon has also been restrained by particular statutes. By the act of settlement, 12 & 13 Will. III., c. 2, Eng., no pardon under the great seal is pleadable to an impeachment by the commons in parliament, but after the articles of impeachment have been heard and determined, he may pardon. The provision in our constitution, excepting cases of impeachment out of the power of the president to pardon, was evidently taken from that statute, and is an improvement upon the same. Nor does the power to pardon in England extend to the *habeas corpus* act, 31 Car. II., c. 2, which makes it a *premunire* to send a subject to any prison out of England, &c., or beyond the seas, and further provides that any person so offending shall be incapable of the king's pardon. There are also pardons grantable as of common right, without any exercise of the king's discretion; as where a statute creating an offense, or enacting penalties for its future punish-

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ment, holds out a promise of immunity to accomplices to aid in the conviction of their associates. When accomplices do so voluntarily, they have a right absolutely to a pardon, 1 Chit. C. L. 766. Also, when, by the king's proclamation, they are promised immunity on discovering their accomplices and are the means of convicting them, Rudd's case, Cowp. 334; 1 Leach, 118. But except in these cases, accomplices, though admitted according to the usual phrase to be \* "king's evidence," have no ab- [\* 313] solute claim or legal right to a pardon. But they have an equitable claim to pardon, if upon the trial a full and fair disclosure of the joint guilt of one of them and his associates is made. He cannot plead it in bar of an indictment for such offense, but he may use it to put off the trial, in order to give him time to apply for a pardon, (Rudd's case, Cowp. 331; 1 Leach, 115.) So, conditional pardons by the king do not permit transportation or exile as a commutable punishment, unless the same has been provided for by legislation. See 39 Eliz., c. 4, & 5 Geo. IV., c. 84, a consolidation of all the laws regulating the transportation of offenders from Great Britain.

Having shown, by the citation of many authorities, the king's power to grant conditional pardons, with the restraints upon the power, also when pardons for offenses and crimes are grantable of course, and when a party has an equitable right to apply for a pardon, we now proceed to show, by the decisions of some of the courts of the States of this Union, that they have expressed opinions coincident with what has been stated to be the law of England, and more particularly how the pardoning power may be exercised in them by the governors of the States, whose constitutions have clauses giving to them the power to grant pardons, in terms identical with those used in the constitution of the United States.

In the constitution of the State of Pennsylvania, of 1790, it is declared in the 2d article, section 9, that the governor shall have power to remit fines and penalties, and grant reprieves and pardons, except in cases of impeachment.

Sargeant, Justice, said in Flavel's case, 8 Watts & Sergeant, 197, "several propositions were made in the convention which formed the constitution of 1838, to limit and control the exercise of the power of pardon by the executive, but they were overruled and the provision left as it stood." "Now, no principle is better settled than that for the definition of legal terms and construction of legal powers mentioned in our constitution and laws; we must resort to the common law when no act of assembly, or judicial interpretation, or settled usage, has altered their meaning."

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Then proceeding to show the nature and application of conditions, the learned judge remarks: "And so may the king make a charter of pardon to a man of his life, upon condition. A pardon, therefore, being an act of such a nature as that by the common law it may be upon any condition, it has the same nature and operation in Pennsylvania, and it follows that the governor may annex to a pardon any condition, whether subsequent or precedent, not forbidden by law. And it lies upon the [ \* 314 ] \* grantee to perform the condition; or if the condition is not performed, the original sentence remains in full vigor and may be carried into effect."

To this case we add those of the *State v. Smith*, 1 Bailey's S. C. Rep. 283, 288; also *Addington's case*, in the 2d volume of the same reporter, p. 516; also *Hunt, ex parte*; also that of the *People v. Potter*, N. Y. Legal Observer, 177; S. C. 1 Parker Criminal Reports, 4; and the case of *The United States v. Geo. Wilson*, 7 Pet. 150.

But it was urged by the counsel who represents the petitioner, that the power to reprieve and pardon does not include the power to grant a conditional pardon, the latter not having been enumerated in the constitution as a distinct power. And he cited the constitutions of several of the States, the legislation of others, and two decisions, to show that when the power to commute punishment had not been given in terms, that legislation had authorized it; and that when that had not been done, that the courts had decided against the commutation by the governors of the States. And it was said, so far from the president having such a power, that, as the grant was not in the constitution, congress could not give it.

It not unfrequently happens in discussions upon the constitution, that an involuntary change is made in the words of it, or in their order, from which, as they are used, there may be a logical conclusion, though it be different from what the constitution is in fact. And even though the change may appear to be equivalent, it will be found upon reflection not to convey the full meaning of the words used in the constitution. This is an example of it. The power as given is not to reprieve and pardon, but that the president shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment. The difference between the real language and that used in the argument is material. The first conveys only the idea of an absolute power as to the purpose or object for which it is given. The real language of the constitution is general, that is, common to the class of pardons, or extending the power to pardon to all kinds of

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pardons known in the law as such, whatever may be their denomination. We have shown that a conditional pardon is one of them. A single remark from the power to grant reprieves will illustrate the point. That is not only to be used to delay a judicial sentence when the president shall think the merits of the case, or some cause connected with the offender, may require it, but it extends also to cases *ex necessitate legis*, as where a female after conviction is found to be *enceinte*, or where a convict becomes insane, or is alleged to be so. Though the reprieve in either case produces delay in the execution of a sentence, the means to [ \* 315 ] be used, to determine either of the two just mentioned, are clearly within the president's power to direct; and reprieves in such cases are different in their legal character, and different as to the causes which may induce the exercise of the power to reprieve.

In this view of the constitution, by giving to its words their proper meaning, the power to pardon conditionally is not one of inference at all, but one conferred in terms.

The mistake in the argument is, in considering an incident of the power to pardon the exercise of a new power, instead of its being a part of the power to pardon. We use the word incident as a legal term, meaning something appertaining to and necessarily depending upon another, which is termed the principal.

But admitting that to be so, it may be said, as the condition, when accepted, becomes a substitute for the sentence of the court, involving another punishment, the latter is substantially the exercise of a new power. But this is not so, for the power to offer a condition, without ability to enforce its acceptance, when accepted by the convict, is the substitution by himself, of a lesser punishment than the law has imposed upon him, and he cannot complain if the law executes the choice he has made.

As to the suggestion that conditional pardons cannot be considered as being voluntarily accepted by convicts so as to be binding upon them, because they are made whilst under *duress per minas* and duress of imprisonment, it is only necessary to remark, that neither applies to this case, as the petitioner was legally in prison. "If a man be legally imprisoned, and either to procure his discharge, or on any other fair account, seal a bond or deed, this is not duress or imprisonment, and he is not at liberty to avoid it. And a man condemned to be hung cannot be permitted to escape the punishment altogether, by pleading that he had accepted his life by *duress per minas*." And if it be further urged, as it was in the argument of this case, that no man can make him-

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self a slave for life by convention, the answer is, that the petitioner had forfeited his life for crime, and had no liberty to part with.

We believe we have now noticed every point made in the argument by counsel on both sides, except that which deduces the president's power to grant a conditional pardon, from the local law of Maryland, of force in the District of Columbia. We do not think it necessary to discuss it, as we have shown that the president's power to do so exists under the constitution of the United States.

We are of opinion that the circuit court of the District of Columbia rightly refused the petitioner's application, and this court affirms it.

[ \* 316 ]     \* Mr. Justice Curtis and Mr. Justice Campbell dissented as to the jurisdiction, and Mr. Justice M'Lean from the judgment of the court.

Mr. Justice McLEAN dissenting.

William Wells was convicted of murder, in the District of Columbia, and sentenced to be hung on the 23d of April, 1852; on which day President Fillmore granted him a conditional pardon, for his acceptance, as follows: "The sentence of death is hereby commuted to imprisonment for life, in the penitentiary, at Washington." On the same day this pardon was accepted, as follows: "I hereby accept the above and within pardon, with condition annexed." This acceptance was signed by Wells, and witnessed by the jailer and warden. Wells now claims that the pardon is absolute and the condition null and void, and that, consequently, he is entitled to a discharge from imprisonment.

Application was made in this case to the circuit court of the District of Columbia by petition for a *habeas corpus*, and on the petition the following entry was made on the records of that court: "William Wells, who was convicted in the circuit court of this District, of murder, and sentenced to be hung the 23d of April, 1852, which sentence was on that day commuted, by the president of the United States, to that of imprisonment for life in the penitentiary of the District, having been brought before that court on a writ of *habeas corpus*, the court, after hearing the arguments of counsel, and mature deliberation being thereupon had, do order that the said William Wells be remanded to the penitentiary, the court being of opinion that the president of the United States has the power to commute the sentence of death to that of imprisonment for life, in the penitentiary."

A petition for a *habeas corpus* to this court has been presented,

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and the case has been argued on its merits, and it is now before us for consideration.

This case is brought here, not as an original application, but in the nature of an appeal from the decision of the circuit court. It is not an appeal in form, but in effect, as it brings the same subject before us, with the decision of the circuit court on the *habeas corpus*, that the principles laid down by it may be considered.

In *ex parte Watkins*, 7 Peters, 568, the court say: "Upon this state of the facts several questions have arisen and been argued at the bar; and one which is preliminary in its nature, at the suggestion of the court. This is, whether, under the circumstances of the case, the court possess jurisdiction to award the writ; and upon full consideration, we are of opinion that \*the [\* 317] court do possess jurisdiction. The question turns upon this, whether it is an exercise of original or appellate jurisdiction? If it be the former, then, as the present is not one of the cases in which the constitution allows this court to exercise original jurisdiction, the writ must be denied. *Marbury v. Madison*, 1 Cranch, 137; 1 Peters's Condensed Rep. 267. If the latter, then it may be awarded, since the judiciary act of 1789, sec. 14, has clearly authorized the court to issue it.

"This was decided in the case *ex parte Hamilton*, 3 Dall. 17; *ex parte Bollman & Swartwout*, 4 Cranch, 75; and *ex parte Kearney*, 7 Wheat. 38. The doubt was, whether, in the actual case before the court, the jurisdiction sought to be exercised was not original, since it brought into question, not the validity of the original process of *capias ad satisfaciendum*, but the present right of detainer of the prisoner under it. Upon further reflection, however, the doubt has been removed."

In that case, this court "considered Watkins in custody under process awarded by the circuit court, and that whether he was rightfully so was the very question before the court; and if the court should remand the prisoner, it would clearly be the exercise of an appellate jurisdiction." The same remark applies with equal force and effect to the case before us.

In this case the question is, whether Wells is rightfully detained, under the order of the circuit court, in virtue of the commutation of the original sentence by the president, and which the circuit court has held to be a legal detention.

It is not perceived that there is any difference, in principle, between this case and the case of Watkins. This court has no power to revise, in this form, the judgment of the circuit court under the law in a criminal case; but, as in the case of Wat-



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kins, we may decide whether the individual is held by a legal custody.

It is said the convict is now in prison under the original sentence of the court. So far as that sentence goes, the man is presumed to have been hung in April, 1852. But it is insisted the president had power to reprieve from the sentence of death. This is admitted; but no reprieve has been granted. On the contrary an act has been done, entirely inconsistent with a reprieve, as that only suspends the punishment for a fixed period. The punishment of death has been commuted for confinement to hard labor in the penitentiary during life. It is a perversion of the facts to say that Wells has been reprieved by the president; nor can it be said that he is now in confinement under a sentence of death. The sentence of death has been commuted for confinement. Since April, 1852, that sentence has been abrogated in effect; for, if the president

had power to commute the crime, the sentence is at an [\* 318] end. The culprit is detained in \* prison under this commutation of the president, which the circuit court held he had the power to do, and remanded the prisoner on that ground; and whether this be legal, is the inquiry on the *habeas corpus*. It does not reach the original sentence of the court. That sentence is considered only as the ground of the commutation; and, if the president had no power to make it, the detention of Wells is illegal. Is not this a legitimate subject of inquiry on a *habeas corpus*? It has been held to be a legal detention by the circuit court, and this opinion of the circuit court is brought before us on the *habeas corpus*, as the only cause of detention.

The second section of the second article of the constitution of the United States declares, that "the president shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachments."

The meaning of the word pardon, as used in the constitution, has never come before this court for decision. It has often been decided in the States that the governor may grant conditional pardons by commuting the punishment. But in these cases the governor acted generally, if not uniformly, under special provisions in the constitution or laws of the State, or on the principles of the common law adopted by the State. This is the case in New York, Maryland, Ohio, and many other States.

It is argued by the attorney general, that the word pardon was used in the constitution in reference to the construction given to it in England, from whence was derived our system of laws and practice; and that the powers exercised by the British sovereign under

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the term pardon is a construction necessarily adopted with the term. If this view be a sound one, it has the merit of novelty. The executive office in England and that of this country is so widely different, that doubts may be entertained whether it would be safe for a republican chief magistrate, who is the creature of the laws, to be influenced by the exercise of any leading power of the British sovereign. Their respective powers are as different in their origin as in their exercise. A safer rule of construction will be found in the nature and principles of our own government. Whilst the prerogatives of the crown are great, and occasionally, in English history, have been more than a match for the parliament, the president has no powers which are not given him by the constitution and laws of the country; and all his acts beyond these limits are null and void.

There is another consideration of paramount importance in regard to this question. We have under the federal government no common-law offenses, nor common-law powers to punish in our courts; and the same may be said of our chief \*magistrate. [\*319] It would be strange indeed if our highest criminal courts should disclaim all common-law powers in punishment of offenses, whilst our president should claim and exercise such powers in pardoning convicts.

The power of commutation overrides the law and the judgments of courts. It substitutes a new, and, it may be, an undefined punishment for that which the law prescribes a specific penalty. It is, in fact, a suspension of the law, and substituting some other punishment which, to the executive, may seem to be more reasonable and proper. It is true the substituted punishment must be assented to by the convict; but the exercise of his judgment, under the circumstances, may be a very inadequate protection for his rights.

If the law controlled the exercise of this power, by authorizing solitary confinement for life, as a substitute for the punishment of death, and so of other offenses, the power would be unobjectionable; the line of action would be certain, and abuses would be prevented. But where this power rests in the discretion of the executive, not only as to its exercise, but as to the degree and kind of punishment substituted, it does not seem to be a power fit to be exercised over a people subject only to the laws.

To speak of a contract, by a convict, to suffer a punishment not known to the law, nor authorized by it, is a strange language in a government of laws. Where the law sanctions such an arrangement, there can be no objection; but when the obligation to suffer

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arises only from the force of a contract, it is a singular instrument of executive power.

Who can foresee the excitements and convulsions which may arise in our future history? The struggle may be between a usurping executive and an incensed people. In such a struggle, this right, claimed by the executive, of substituting one punishment for another, under the pardoning power, may become dangerous to popular rights. It must be recollected that this power may be exercised, not only in capital cases, but also in misdemeanors, embracing all offenses punished by the laws of congress. Banishment, or other modes of punishment, may be substituted and inflicted, at the discretion of the national executive. I cannot consent to the enlargement of executive power, acting upon the rights of individuals, which is not restrained and guided by positive law.

I have no doubt the president, under the power to pardon, may remit the penalty in part, but this consists in shortening the time of imprisonment, or reducing the amount of the fine, or in releasing entirely from the one or the other. This acts directly upon the sentence of the court, under the law, and is strictly [ \* 320 ] an \*exercise of the pardoning power in lessening the degree of punishment, called for by mistaken facts on the trial, or new ones which have since become known.

The case of the United States *v.* Wilson, 7 Pet. 150, has been referred to by the attorney general, as sanctioning conditional pardons. But the remarks of the court in that case arose on the pleadings, and not on the power of the president. He had pardoned Wilson, but that pardon had not been pleaded, or brought before the court by motion or otherwise, and the court held that the pardon could not be considered, unless it was brought judicially before it. In that case the chief justice said: "The constitution gives to the president, in general terms, the power to grant reprieves, and pardons for offenses against the United States."

And he says, "as this power has been exercised from time immemorial by the executive of that nation whose language is our language, and to whose judicial institutions ours bear a close resemblance, we adopt their principles, respecting the operation and effect of a pardon, and look into their books for the rules prescribing the manner in which it is to be used by the person who would avail himself of it." And he goes on to show that a pardon, like any other defense, must be pleaded to enable the court to act upon it. There is nothing in the case which countenances the power of the president, as in this case is contended, to commute the punishment of death for confinement during life in the penitentiary. The

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chief justice said, "a pardon may be conditional," in reference to grants of pardon in England, and by governors of States.

There can be no doubt, where one punishment is substituted, under the laws of England, for another—as banishment for death—if the convict shall return, he may be arrested on the original offense; and if he shall be found by a jury to be the identical person originally convicted, the penalty of death incurred by him may be inflicted. And the same thing may be done in regard to all offenses where, in this country, the law authorizes the pardoning power to modify the punishment and give effect to the commutation.

In 4 Call. 35, in Virginia, a case is reported where the prisoner was indicted for felony. On motion of the attorney general for an award of execution, the governor's pardon was pleaded, and urged as absolute, because the governor had no authority to annex the condition. The general court held that the condition was illegal, and therefore the pardon was absolute. Another case in North Carolina, reported in 4 Hawks. 193, the defendant was convicted of forgery, sentenced to the pillory, three years' imprisonment, thirty-nine lashes, and a fine of one \*thousand [\*321] dollars; execution issued for fine and costs; conditional pardon by the governor. The judge said, the governor cannot add or commute a punishment—it was consistent with his power to remit.

We are told that when a term is used in our constitution or statutes which is known at the common law, we look to that system for its meaning. Pardon is a word familiar in common-law proceedings, but it is not a term peculiar to such proceedings. It applies to the ordinary intercourse of men, and it means remission, forgiveness. It is said, in a monarchy, the offense is against the monarch, and that, consequently, he is the only proper person to forgive.

Bacon says, the power of pardoning is irreparably incident to the crown, and is a high prerogative of the king. And Comyns, in his digest, says: "The king, by his prerogative, may grant his pardon to all offenders attainted or convicted of a crime; and that statutes do not restrain the king's prerogative, but they are a caution for using it well."

The power to pardon is a prerogative power of the monarch, which cannot, it seems, be restrained by statute. Is this the usage or the common-law meaning of the word pardon, to which we are to refer as a guide in the present case? If the president can exercise the pardoning power, as free from restraints as the queen of England, his prerogative is much greater than has been sup-

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posed. Instead of looking into the nature of our government, for the true meaning of terms vesting powers in the executive, are we to be instructed by studying the regalia of the crown of England; not to ascertain the definition of the word pardon, but to be assured what powers are exercised under it by the monarch of England. This is a new rule of construction of the constitutional powers of the president. I had thought he was the mere instrument of the law, and that the flowers of the crown of England did not ornament his brow.

In his commentary on the constitution, Judge Story says, 346: "The whole structure of our government is so entirely different, and the elements of which it is composed are so dissimilar from that of England, that no argument can be drawn from the practice of the latter, to assist us in a just arrangement of the executive authority."

It is not the meaning of the word pardon that is objected to; but it is the prerogative powers of the crown which are exercised under that designation. The president is the executive power in this country, as the queen holds the executive authority in England. Are we to be instructed as to the extent of the executive power in this country, by looking into the exercise of the same power in England?

[ \* 322 ] \* In the act for the better government of the navy of the United States, passed the 23d April, 1800, (2 Stats. at Large, p. 51, art. 42,) it is declared: "The president of the United States, or, when the trial takes place out of the United States, the commander of the fleet or squadron, shall possess full power to pardon any offense committed against these articles, after conviction, or to mitigate the punishment decreed by a court-martial." If, in the opinion of congress, the power to pardon included the power to commute the punishment, this provision would seem to be unnecessary.

But admit that the power of the president to pardon is as great as are the prerogatives of the crown of England, still the act before us is unsustainable. The queen of England cannot do what the president has done in this instance. She has no power, except under statutes, to commute a punishment, to which the prisoner has been judicially sentenced, for any other punishment at her discretion.

By the act of George III., c. 140, it is provided, "that if his majesty shall be graciously pleased to extend his mercy to any offender liable to the punishment of death by the sentence of a naval court-martial, upon condition of transportation, or of trans-

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porting himself beyond seas, or upon condition of being imprisoned within any jail in Great Britain, or on condition of being kept to hard labor in any jail or house of correction, or penitentiary house, &c., it shall and may be lawful for any justice of the king's bench, &c., upon such intention of mercy as aforesaid being notified in writing, to allow to such offender the benefit of such conditional pardon as shall be expressed in such notification. And the judge is required to make an order in regard to the punishment, which is declared to be as effectual as if such punishment had been inflicted by the sentence of the court; and the sentence of death was made to apply to such offender, should he escape."

And again, by the act of George IV., 21st June, 1824, it is provided, "when his majesty shall be pleased to extend his mercy, upon condition of transportation beyond seas, &c., one of his majesty's principal secretaries shall signify the same to the proper court, before which the offender has been convicted; such court shall allow to such offender the benefit of a conditional pardon, and make an order for the immediate transportation of such offender. And the act declares that any person found at large, who has been thus transported, should suffer death," &c.

Statute 28, 7 and 8 of George IV., § 13, declares that "when the king's majesty shall be pleased to extend his royal mercy to any offender, his royal sign-manual, countersigned by one of his \* principal secretaries of state, shall grant to such [ \* 323 ] offender a free or a conditional pardon," &c.

In 54 Geo. III., c. 146, where there was a conviction for high treason, the king was authorized to change the punishment—that said person shall not be hanged by the neck—but that instead thereof such person should be beheaded, &c.

It is laid down in Coke's 3d Institute, vol. 6, p. 52: "Neither can the king by any warrant under the great seal alter the execution, otherwise than the judgment of the law doth direct." In the same book, p. 211, he says, "it is a maxim of law, that execution must be according to the judgment."

The sovereign of England, with all the prerogatives of the crown, in granting a conditional pardon, cannot substitute a punishment which the law does not authorize. The law authorizes the sovereign to transport, or inflict other punishments, for certain offenses, and this being signified to some one or more of the judges, effect is given to the condition through his or their instrumentality. So that the punishment inflicted is matter of record. And should the offender return into England, after banishment, the law subjects him to punishment under the original conviction.



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Here is certainty in limiting on the one hand the discretion of the pardoning power, and on the other the rights of the culprit.

With very few, if any, exceptions, conditional pardons have not been granted by the governors of States, except where express authority has been given in the constitution or laws of the States. So early as the 12th of March, 1794, a law of New York provided "that it shall and may be lawful for the person administering the government of the State, for the time being, in all cases in which he is authorized by the constitution to grant pardons, to grant the same upon such conditions, and with such restrictions, and under such limitations, as he may think proper."

The distinguished attorney general of the United States, Mr. Wirt, being called on for his opinion in a case differing from the present, but involving, to some extent, the same principles, in his letter of 4th January, 1820, to the secretary of the navy, says: "Your letter of the 30th ultimo submits, for my opinion, the power of the president to change the sentence of death, which has been passed by a general court-martial on William Bonsman, a private in the marine corps, into a sentence of "service and restraint for the space of one year, after which to cause him to be drummed from the marine corps as a disgrace to it."

He refers to the 42d article of the rules and regulations of the navy, which embrace the marine corps, and which declares that the president of the United States shall possess full power to [ \* 324 ] \*pardon any offense against these articles after conviction or to mitigate the punishment decreed by a court-martial." And, he says, "the power of pardoning the offense does not, in my opinion, include the power of changing the punishment; but the "power to mitigate the punishment," decreed by a court-martial, cannot, I think, be fairly understood in any other sense than as meaning a power to substitute a milder punishment in the place of that decreed by the court-martial, in which sense it would justify the sentence which the president proposes to substitute, in the case under consideration."

The power of mitigation, he says, "in general terms, leaves the manner of performing this act of mercy to himself, and if it can be performed in no other way than by changing its species, the president has, in my opinion, the power of adopting this form of mitigation;" and he observes, "to deny him the power of changing the punishment in this instance, is to deny him the power of mitigating the severest of all punishments. Congress foresaw that there were cases in which the exercise of the power of entire pardon might be proper; they therefore, in the first branch of the article,

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gave him the power to pardon. But they foresaw also, that there would be cases in which it would be improper to pardon the offense entirely, in which there ought to be some punishment, but in which, nevertheless, it might be proper to inflict a milder punishment than that decreed by the court-martial; and hence, in another distinct member of the article they give him, in general terms, the separate and distinct power of mitigation."

It will be seen that Mr. Wirt places the power of mitigation expressly under the article cited.

In a letter to the president on the power to pardon, dated 30th March, 1820, Mr. Wirt says: "The power of pardon, as given by the constitution, is the power of absolute and entire pardon. On the principle, however, that the greater power includes the less, I am of opinion that the power of pardoning absolutely includes the power of pardoning conditionally. There is, however," he says, "great danger lest a conditional pardon should operate as an absolute one, from the difficulty of enforcing the condition, or, in case of a breach of it, resorting to the original sentence of condemnation; which difficulty arises from the limited powers of the national government.

"But suppose," he remarks, "a pardon granted on a condition, to be executed by officers of the federal government—as, for example, to work on a public fortification—and suppose this condition violated by running away, where is the power of arrest, in these circumstances, given by any law of the United States?

And suppose the arrest could be made, where is the \*clause [ \* 325 ] in any of our judiciary acts that authorizes a court to proceed in such a state of things? And without some positive legislative regulation on the subject, I know that some of our federal judges would not feel themselves at liberty to proceed, *de novo*, on the original case. It is true the king of England grants such conditional pardons by the common law; but the same common law has provided the mode of proceeding for a breach of the condition on the part of the culprit. We have no common law here, however, and hence arises the difficulty." And he says, "If a condition can be devised whose execution would be certain, I have no doubt that the president may pardon on such condition. All conditions precedent would be of this character; *e. g.*, pardon to a military officer under sentence of death, on the previous condition of resigning his commission."

In his letter to the president, dated 18th September, 1845, Mr. Attorney General Mason says: "I cannot doubt the power of the president to mitigate a sentence of dismissal from the service, by

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commuting it into a suspension for a term of years, without pay. A dismissal is a perpetual suspension without pay; and the limited suspension without pay is the inferior degree of the same punishment. The minor is contained in the major." And he says: "The sentence of death for murder could be mitigated by substituting any punishment which the law would authorize the court to inflict for manslaughter. This is the inferior degree of the offense."

And again, in his letter to the secretary of the navy, dated 16th of October, 1845, Mr. Mason says: "Did this power to mitigate the sentence include the power to commute or substitute another and a milder punishment for that decreed by the court, (referring to a court-martial,) the mitigation," he says, "must be of the punishment adjudged, by reducing and modifying its severity, except as in sentences of death, where there is no degree." He says: "At the war department it has always been considered that the executive has not the power, by way of mitigation, to substitute a different punishment for that inflicted by sentence of a court-martial—the general rule being that the mitigated sentence must be a part of the punishment decreed." He further remarks, "that in 1820, Mr. Wirt gave an opinion recognizing this rule, but made a substitution of a different punishment for the sentence of death an exception; and he places it on the ground that capital punishment can only be mitigated by a change of punishment." Mr. Attorney General should have said, that the power given in the article to mitigate was referred to by Mr. Wirt as authorizing the mitigation, and not the general power to pardon.

No higher authority than Mr. Wirt can be found, as [ \* 326 ] coming \* from the law officer of the government. It gives to the procedure now before us no countenance or support, but throws the weight of his great name against the exercise of the power assumed.

But it is said, that the power of commutation may be exercised by the president under the laws of Maryland, adopted by congress on the cession of the territory which now constitutes the District of Columbia.

The constitution of Maryland provides, that the governor "alone may exercise all other the executive powers of government, where the concurrence of council is not required according to the laws of the State, and grant reprieves or pardons for any crime, except in cases where the law shall otherwise direct." This, I suppose, no one will contend, can be applied to the president of the United States. The constitutional provision is made subject to the action of the legislature.

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A statute of Maryland was passed in 1847, c. 17, to make conditional pardons effectual. This law can only tend to show that there was no prior law by which such pardons could be made effectual.

The first law of Maryland on the subject of pardon was enacted in 1787. The first section provided "that the governor may, in his discretion, grant to any offender capitally convicted a pardon, on condition contained therein, and is and shall be effectual as a condition according to the intent thereof."

The second section provides, if the convict be a slave, he may be transported out of the State, and sold for the benefit of the State.

The 4th sect. declares, if a party who has been pardoned on condition of leaving the State shall return contrary thereto, he shall be arrested, and on being found by a jury to be the same person, the court shall pass such judgment as the law requires for the crime committed.

The second law on the same subject was enacted in 1795.

The 1st sect. requires the governor to issue a warrant to the sheriff, to carry the sentence of the court into effect. The 2d sect. that, in his discretion, the governor may commute or change any sentence or judgment of death into other punishment of such criminal of this State, upon such terms and conditions as he shall think expedient. And if a slave, he may be transported and sold for the benefit of the State.

By an act of congress of the 27th of February, 1801, it was declared, "that the laws of Maryland, as they now exist, shall be and continue in force in that part of the said district which was ceded by that State to the United States, and by them accepted." This provision covers what is now the District of Columbia.

\* That the general laws of Maryland for the punish- [\* 327] ment of offenses, the practice of the courts, forms of actions, contracts, &c., come under the laws of Maryland, is undoubted. But the question is, whether the above laws which regulate pardons by the governor, apply to the president of the United States, in the exercise of the same power. After much reflection, I have come to the conclusion that they can neither justify nor control the exercise of the constitutional power of the president to grant a pardon, for the following reasons:

1. Their language is inappropriate, and some of their provisions are inconsistent with the duties of the president. The governor is required to issue a warrant to execute the sentence of the court, and also to sell convicted slaves for the benefit of the State. Can the president do this?

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2. For more than half a century these acts have not been applied to the president, although he has often granted pardons, until in the case now before us. Nor have either of the laws been referred to by any one of the attorneys general who have been consulted on the subject, and who have given elaborate opinions, and particularly Mr. Wirt, who dwells upon the difficulty, if not impracticability, of carrying out the condition on which the pardon was granted, without specific legislation. No reference was made to these laws by the late attorney general, on whose advice the punishment of death was commuted, in favor of Wells, to imprisonment for life.

3. Any regulation respecting the high prerogative power to pardon or commute the punishment of a convict, must be general, and extend as far as the federal jurisdiction extends, and cannot be restricted by any act of congress to any particular State or Territory. The power is given in the constitution, and it may be exercised commensurate with that fundamental law; and any modification of the power, to be exercised at the discretion of the president, must be co-extensive with the constitutional power.

The 8th section of the 1st article of the constitution declares, that congress shall have power "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof."

4. The above acts of Maryland can only operate in this case as acts of congress, and in that view they have been enacted more than fifty years, without being referred to or acted on during that period, although the subject of conditional pardon has been often discussed, and the want of provisions which they contain deeply felt and expressed. Under such circumstances, [ \* 328 ] \* is it possible to consider those acts, or either of them, as in force in this District since 1801? If this be so, it is the most extraordinary event that has occurred in the legal history of any country.

The laws adopted from Maryland were not specified by name; of course, those only which were local in their character, and were necessary in their nature to regulate local transactions, and the courts which settle controversies, were adopted. The laws which regulate the duty and powers of the governor, in regard to pardons granted to offenders, no more apply to the president than duties prescribed for the action of the governor in any other matter. This shows the reason why the above laws have been dormant, as

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if unknown, for more than fifty years. It is too late now to resuscitate them, however strongly the present exigency may call for them.

I am not opposed to commutation of punishment, where it may be called for by any great principle of justice or humanity; but the exercise of such power should be regulated by law, and not left to the discretion of the executive. As the law now stands, the punishment substituted, as well as the exercise of the power, rests upon discretion; and there is no legal mode of giving effect to the commutation; and this is an unanswerable objection to it. No court would execute the convict on the original sentence under such circumstances.

If the condition on which a pardon shall be granted be void, the pardon becomes absolute. This, I think, is a clear principle, although there may be found some opinions against it. The president has the power to pardon, and if he make the grant on an impossible condition—for a void condition may be considered of that character—the grant is valid.

The condition being void, I think Wells is illegally detained, and should be discharged.

Mr. Justice CURTIS. In *ex parte Kaine*, 14 How. 117, I examined, with care, the jurisdiction of this court to issue writs of *habeas corpus* to inquire into causes of commitment. I then came to the conclusion that the mere fact that a circuit court had examined the cause of commitment and refused to discharge the prisoner, did not enable this court, by a writ of *habeas corpus*, to re-examine the same cause of commitment. Though subsequent reflection has confirmed the opinion then formed, I should have acquiesced in the jurisdiction assumed in this case, if a majority of the court, in Kaine's case, had decided contrary to my opinion. But the question was then left undecided; and in this case, for the first time, in my judgment, has jurisdiction been assumed, on the \*ground, not that the cause of commitment was originally [\* 329] examinable here—for that would be an exercise of original jurisdiction—but that, though not thus originally examinable, yet, as the circuit court has had the prisoner before it, and has remanded him, this court, by a writ of *habeas corpus*, may examine that decision and see whether it be erroneous or not.

That this is the only ground on which the jurisdiction over this case can be rested, or that it cannot be considered to be an examination of the original cause of commitment, will clearly appear, if we attend to what that cause of commitment was. The petitioner



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was convicted capitally. His sentence is not brought before us in form, but we must infer that it ordered him to be imprisoned until the day which was by the court, or should be by the executive, fixed for his execution. He received a conditional pardon. Regularly, I consider, that he should have been brought before the circuit court upon a writ of *habeas corpus*, and have there pleaded his pardon, in bar of so much of his sentence as directed him to be hung; or, in bar of the entire sentence, if the condition requiring him to continue in imprisonment for life was inoperative. *United States v. Wilson*, 7 Peters, 150. If this had been done, the circuit court would have pronounced its judgment upon the validity of such plea; and in conformity with the decision which that court has made in this case, it must have entered a judgment vacating its former sentence, and sentencing the petitioner to imprisonment during life in the penitentiary of this District.

Over such a sentence this court could have exercised no control, either by writ of error or of *habeas corpus*. Not by writ of error, for none is allowed in criminal cases. Not by *habeas corpus*, for, as was held in *ex parte Watkins*, 3 Pet. 193, a writ of *habeas corpus* cannot issue from this court to examine a criminal sentence of the circuit court, even where the objection to the sentence is, that it appears on the face of the record, in the opinion of this court, that the circuit court had not jurisdiction, and its proceeding was merely void; because the circuit courts are the final judges of their own jurisdiction; and of all their proceedings in criminal cases. This court has no power to reverse one of their criminal judgments for any cause, and consequently no power to form any judicial opinion upon the correctness thereof.

In the case before us, so far as appears, the petitioner did not formally plead his pardon, nor did the circuit court, by an entry on its records, formally vacate the capital sentence, and sentence the prisoner anew. But that court, using its own final judgment as to the proper mode of proceeding in this criminal case, proceeded in such manner and form as it deemed to be accord-

[ \* 330 ] \* ing to law. It remanded the prisoner, in execution of the original sentence, so far as that directed his imprisonment. After this had been done, the imprisonment may be viewed in one of two aspects. It may be considered as continued under the original sentence; the execution of that part of the sentence which commanded him to be hung being postponed by the pardon, so long as there shall be no breach of the condition; or the original sentence may be treated as modified by the proceedings under the *habeas corpus* in the circuit court, and that part of the sen-

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tence which commanded him to be hung, as annulled, the residue remaining in force.

As I view this case, therefore, it stands thus: the petitioner is imprisoned under a criminal sentence of the circuit court, either as originally pronounced, or as modified by the order of the circuit court made under the writ of *habeas corpus*. That original or modified criminal sentence is the cause of his commitment. Though this court has no jurisdiction by writ of error to revise such a sentence, and has deliberately decided, in *ex parte Watkins*, that a writ of *habeas corpus* cannot be made a writ of error for such a purpose, yet by a writ of *habeas corpus* we do revise such a sentence in this case.

It seems to me that the refusal of a writ of error in criminal cases is not only idle, but mischievous, if a writ of *habeas corpus*, which is certainly a very clumsy proceeding for the purpose, may be resorted to, to bring the record of every criminal case, of whatever kind, before this court.

With deference for the opinions of my brethren, in my judgment, it goes very little way towards avoiding the difficulty to hold that, before one under a criminal sentence of a circuit court can thus attack his sentence collaterally, in a court which cannot review it by any direct proceeding, he must first apply to the circuit court for a writ of *habeas corpus*; and if the writ, or his discharge under it, be refused, he may then bring into action the appellate power of this court, and by a writ of *habeas corpus* out of this court stop the execution of a sentence, which we have no power to reverse. Few questions come before this court which may affect the general course of justice more deeply than questions of jurisdiction. This great remedial writ of *habeas corpus*, so efficacious and prompt in its action, and so justly valued in our country, may become an instrument to unsettle the nicely adjusted lines of jurisdiction, and produce conflict and disorder. If the true sphere of its action, and the precise limits of the power to issue it, should become in any degree confused or indistinct, serious consequences may follow—consequences not only affecting the efficient administration of the criminal laws of the United States, but the harmonious action of the \*divided sovereignties by which our country [\* 331] is governed. For these reasons, though sensible of the bias, which, I suppose, every one has in favor of this process, I have heretofore felt, and now feel, constrained to examine with care the question of our jurisdiction to issue it; and being of opinion that this court has not power to inquire into the validity of the

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cause of commitment stated in this petition, I think it should be dismissed for that reason.

In this opinion Mr. Justice CAMPBELL concurs.

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GEORGE C. DODGE, Appellant, v. JOHN M. WOOLSEY.

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RIGHT OF STOCKHOLDERS TO BRING SUIT IN EQUITY AGAINST THE CORPORATION AND THE DIRECTORS.

1. A stockholder in a corporation may bring a suit in equity which ought to have been brought by the corporation, when the directors refuse to do so, and when the circumstances of the case justify the interference of the chancellor.
2. The circumstances under which such a suit will be sustained, and the limitations of the right, considered very fully.
3. To such a suit other parties besides the directors and the corporation may be made, as the ends of justice and the rules of chancery proceedings require.
4. Nor is it any objection that the stockholder, who is complainant, by reason of his citizenship, brings the suit in a court of the United States, when the corporation could not have done so.
5. A provision in the charter of a banking corporation, fixing the rate of taxation on the bank by the State which charters it, is a contract, and a subsequent statute increasing the rate of taxation on the bank is void, as impairing the obligation of that contract.
6. This principle is not varied by the fact that the subsequent statute increasing the tax was authorized by a new constitution of the State, adopted by the people after the charter was granted.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the district of Ohio, and the case is fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Spalding and Mr. Pugh*, for appellant.

*Mr. Stanberry and Mr. Vinton*, for appellee.

[ \* 336 ] \*Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court.

It must often happen, under such a government as that of the United States, that constitutional questions will be brought to this court for decision, demanding extended investigation and its most careful judgment.

This is one of that kind; but fortunately it involves no new principles, nor any assertion of judicial action which has not been repeatedly declared to be within the constitutional and legislative jurisdiction of the courts of the United States, and by way of appeal or by writ of error, as the case may be, within that of the supreme court.

It is a suit in chancery, which was brought by John M. Woolsey,

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in the circuit court of the United States for the district of Ohio, seeking to enjoin the collection of a tax assessed by the State of Ohio on the Commercial Branch Bank of Cleveland, a branch of the State Bank of Ohio. He makes George C. Dodge, the tax collector, the directors of the bank, and the bank itself, defendants.

Woolsey avers that he is a citizen of the State of Connecticut, that he is the owner of thirty shares in the Branch Bank of Cleveland, that Dodge and the other defendants are all citizens of the State of Ohio, and that the Commercial Bank of Cleveland, is a corporation, and was made such, as a branch of the State Bank of Ohio, by an act of the general assembly of that State, passed the 24th of February, 1845, entitled "An act to incorporate the State Bank of Ohio and other banking companies." He alleges that the Commercial Bank has in all things complied with the requirements of its charter, and that, by the \*60th section of the [ \* 337 ] act, it is declared that each banking company organized under it and complying with its provisions, shall, semi-annually, on the 1st of May and 1st of November of each year, those being the days for declaring dividends, set off to the State of Ohio six per cent. on the profits, deducting therefrom the expenses and ascertained losses of the company, for six months next preceding each dividend day; and that the sums so set off shall be in lieu of all taxes to which said company, or the stockholders thereof, on account of stock owned therein, would otherwise be subject; and that the cashier of such company shall, within ten days thereafter, inform the auditor of the State of Ohio of the amount set off, and shall pay the same to the treasurer of the State on the order of the auditor.

It is averred that the Bank of Cleveland had at all times complied with the requirements of the act. That, in the year 1853, it set off to the State six per cent. on the two semi-annual dividends which had been made in that year, on the first day of May and the first day of November, which amounted in the aggregate to the sum of \$3,206 $\frac{66}{100}$ . That the same had been notified to the auditor, and that the bank had always been ready to pay the same when demanded. The complainant then avers, that three years before bringing his suit, having full confidence that the State of Ohio would observe good faith towards the bank, in respect to its franchises and privileges conferred upon it by the act of incorporation, and that it would adhere with fidelity to the rule of taxation provided for in the charter, he had purchased thirty shares of the capital stock of the bank, and that he was then the owner of the same. He further states, after he had made such purchases, that on the 17th

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of June, 1851, a draft of a new constitution had been submitted to the electors of the State for their acceptance or rejection, which, if accepted by a majority of the electors who should vote, was to take effect as the constitution of the State, on the 1st of September, 1851. It is admitted that it was accepted, that it became and now is the constitution of the State of Ohio. It is provided in sections two and three of the 12th article of that constitution, that laws shall be passed, taxing by an uniform rule, all moneys, credits, investments in bonds, stock, joint-stock companies, or otherwise; and that the general assembly shall provide by law for taxing the notes and bills discounted or purchased, money loaned, and all other property, effects, or dues whatever, without deduction, of all banks now existing, or hereafter created, and of all bankers, so that all property employed in banking shall always bear a burden of taxation equal to that imposed on the property of individuals. And in the 4th section of the 13th article of the constitution of 1851, it is [ \* 338 ] further \*declared, that the property of corporations now existing, or hereafter created, shall be subject to taxation, as the property of individuals.

It appears also by the bill, that the general assembly of the State of Ohio passed an act on the 13th of April, 1852, for the assessment and taxation of all property in the State, and for levying taxes on the same according to its true value in money, in which it is declared to be the duty of the president and cashier of every bank, or banking company, "that shall have been, or may hereafter be, incorporated by the laws of the State, and having the right to issue bills for circulation as money, to make and return, under oath, to the auditor of the county in which such banks may be, in the month of May, annually, a written statement containing, first, the average amount of notes and bills discounted or purchased, which amount shall include all the loans or discounts, whether originally made, or renewed during the year, or at any time previous; whether made on bills of exchange, notes, bonds, mortgages, or other evidence of indebtedness, at their actual cost value in money; whether due previous to, during, or after the period aforesaid, and on which said banking company has, at any time, recovered or received, or is entitled to receive, any profit or other consideration whatever, either in the shape of interest, discount, exchange, or otherwise; and secondly, the average amount of all other moneys, effects, or dues of every description, belonging to such bank, or banking company, loaned, invested, or otherwise used or employed, with a view to profit, or upon which such bank, or banking company receives, or is entitle to receive, interest."

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The act then makes it the duty of the auditors, in the counties in which a bank or banking companies may be, to receive from them returns of notes and bills discounted, and all other moneys and effects or dues, as provided for in the 19th section of the act, to enter the same for taxation upon the grand duplicate of the property of the county, and upon the city duplicate for city taxes, in cases where the city tax is not returned upon the grand duplicate, but is collected by city officers; which amounts so returned and entered shall be taxed for the same purposes and to the same extent that personal property is; or may be taxed, in the place where such bank or banking company is situated. It is then averred that the president and cashier of the Commercial Bank of Cleveland, fearing the penalty imposed by the act for a refusal or neglect to make a return according to the act, did, in the month of May, in the year 1852, make a return, protesting against the right of the State to assess a tax upon the bank, other than that which was provided for, in the charter of its incorporation of the 24th February, 1845.

But it appears \*that the return so coerced from the presi- [ \* 339 ] dent and directors of the bank had been assessed by the auditor, for the tax of 1852, at \$10,197 $\frac{55}{100}$ , exceeding by \$7,526 $\frac{72}{100}$  the amount of tax for which the bank was liable under its charter, which George C. Dodge, as collector of taxes, seized and collected by distress on its moneys. It is also shown by the bill, that there has been another entry of taxation against the bank for the year 1853, of \$14,771 $\frac{87}{100}$ , exceeding the sum to which it is liable under its charter by \$11,665 $\frac{22}{100}$  for that year.

It is against the collection of this tax that John M. Woolsey, as a stockholder in the bank, has brought this suit, claiming an exemption from it as a stockholder, upon the ground that the act of the general assembly of the State of Ohio, and the tax assessed under it upon the bank, are in violation of the 10th section of the 1st article of the constitution of the United States, which declares that no State shall pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts. And he seeks the aid of the circuit court to enjoin Dodge, the defendant, from collecting the same from the bank, as collector of taxes, as he had threatened to do by distress, and as he had done for the assessed tax for the year 1852.

The complainant gives a further aspect to his suit which it is also proper to notice. It is, if the taxes are permitted to be assessed and collected from the bank, under the act of the 13th of April, 1852, it will virtually destroy and annul the contract between the State and the bank, in respect to the tax which the State imposed upon it by the charter of its incorporation, in lieu of all other taxes upon



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the bank or the stockholders thereof, on account of stock owned therein; that his stock will be thereby lessened in value, his dividends diminished; and that the tax is so onerous upon the bank, that it will compel a suspension and final cessation of its business. He finally declares that as a stockholder, on his own behalf, he had requested the directors of the bank to take measures, by suit or otherwise, to assert the franchises of the bank against the collection of what he believes to be an unconstitutional tax, and that they had refused to do so.

To this bill the defendant, George C. Dodge, filed an answer. The other defendants did not answer. He admits the material allegations of the bill, except the allegation that the tax law of April 13, 1852, is unconstitutional; says that the act is in conformity with the constitution of Ohio, which took effect September 1, 1851, and that it is in harmony with the constitution of the United States. He denies that any application was made by Woolsey to the directors of the bank, to take measures, by suit or otherwise, [ \* 340 ] to prevent the collection of the tax, and \* insists that this averment was inserted merely for the purpose of giving color to a proceeding in chancery. That the complainant would not have sustained an irreparable injury even if he had, as treasurer, proceeded to distrain for the tax; for that the bank would have had a remedy at law against him for all damages which might have been sustained in consequence of such distress, as he is worth, at a reasonable estimate, eighty thousand dollars after the payment of all his debts. And he insists that the complainant had not exhibited such a case as entitled him to the interposition of a court of equity. To this answer a general replication was filed. But it was agreed by the counsel in the cause that the complainant had, by his attorney, addressed a letter to the Commercial Bank of Cleveland, to institute proper proceedings to prevent the collection of the tax by Dodge, in the same manner as had been done by the attorney of a stockholder in the Canal Bank of Cleveland, for a tax assessed upon it under the same act, and that the action of the board of the Commercial Bank, in answer to Woolsey's application, was the same as had been given by the directors of the Canal Bank. That resolution was in these words: "Resolved, that we fully concur in the views expressed in said letter as to the illegality of the tax therein named, and believe it to be in no way binding upon the bank; but, in consideration of the many obstacles in the way of testing the law in the courts of the State, we cannot consent to take the action which we are called upon to take, but must leave

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the said Kleman to pursue such measures as he may deem best in the premises."

Upon the foregoing pleadings and admission, the circuit court rendered a final decree for the complainant, perpetually enjoining the treasurer against the collection of the tax, under the act of the 13th February, 1852, and subjecting the defendant, Dodge, to the payment of the costs of the suit. From that decision the defendant, Dodge, has appealed to this court.

His counsel have relied upon the following points to sustain the appeal:

1. The complainant does not show himself to be entitled to relief in a court of chancery, because the charter of the bank provides that its affairs shall be managed by a board of directors, and that they are not amenable to the stockholders for an error of judgment merely. And that in order to make them so, it should have been averred that they were in collusion with the tax collector in their refusal to take legal steps to test the validity of the tax.

2. It was urged that this suit had been improperly brought in the circuit court of the United States for the district of Ohio, because it is a contrivance to create a jurisdiction, where none \* fairly exists, by substituting an individual stock- [\* 341] holder in place of the Commercial Bank as complainant, and making the directors defendants; the stockholder being made complainant, because he is a citizen of the State of Connecticut, and the directors being made defendants to give countenance to his suit.

3. It was said, if the foregoing points were not available to defeat the action, that it might be contended that the defendant was in the discharge of his official duty when interrupted by the mandate of the circuit court, and that the tax had been properly assessed by the law of the State, in conformity with its constitution, of the 1st September, 1851.

We will consider the points in their order. The first comprehends two propositions, namely: that courts of equity have no jurisdiction over corporations, as such, at the suit of a stockholder for violations of charters, and none for the errors of judgment of those who manage their business ordinarily.

There has been a conflict of judicial authority in both. Still, it has been found necessary, for prevention of injuries for which common-law courts were inadequate, to entertain in equity such a jurisdiction in the progressive development of the powers and effects of private corporations upon all the business and interests of society.

It is now no longer doubted, either in England or the United

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States, that courts of equity, in both, have a jurisdiction over corporations, at the instance of one or more of their members; to apply preventive remedies by injunction, to restrain those who administer them from doing acts which would amount to a violation of charters, or to prevent any misapplication of their capitals or profits, which might result in lessening the dividends of stockholders, or the value of their shares, as either may be protected by the franchises of a corporation, if the acts intended to be done create what is in the law denominated a breach of trust. And the jurisdiction extends to inquire into, and to enjoin, as the case may require that to be done, any proceedings by individuals, in whatever character they may profess to act, if the subject of complaint is an imputed violation of a corporate franchise, or the denial of a right growing out of it, for which there is not an adequate remedy at law. 2 Russ. & Mylne Ch. R., *Cunliffe v. Manchester and Bolton Canal Company*, 480, *n.*; *Ware v. Grand Junction Water Company*, 2 Russ. & Mylne, 470; *Bagshaw v. Eastern Counties Railway Company*, 7 Hare Ch. R. 114; *Angell & Ames*, 4th ed. 424, and the other cases there cited.

It was ruled in the case of *Cunliffe v. The Manchester and Bolton Canal Company*, 2 Russ. & Mylne Ch. R. 481, that where the legal remedy against a corporation is inadequate, a [ \* 342 ] \*court of equity will interfere, and that there were cases in which a bill in equity will lie against a corporation by one of its members. "It is a breach of trust towards a shareholder in a joint stock incorporated company, established for certain definite purposes prescribed by its character, if the funds or credit of the company are, without his consent, diverted from such purpose, though the misapplication be sanctioned by the votes of a majority; and, therefore, he may file a bill in equity against the company in his own behalf, to restrain the company by injunction from any such diversion or misapplication." In the case of *Ware v. Grand Junction Water Company*, 2 Russell & Mylne, a bill filed by a member of the company against it, Lord Brougham said: "It is said this is an attempt on the part of the company to do acts which they are not empowered to do by the acts of parliament," meaning the charter of the company; "so far I restrain them by injunction." "Indeed, an investment in the stock of a corporation must, by every one, be considered a wild speculation, if it exposed the owners of the stock to all sorts of risk in support of plausible projects not set forth and authorized by the act of incorporation, and which may possibly lead to extraordinary losses." The same jurisdiction was invoked and applied in the case of *Bag-*

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shaw v. The Eastern Counties Railway Company; so, also, in Coleman v. The same company, 10 Beavan's Ch. Reports, 1. It appeared in that case that the directors of the company, for the purpose of increasing their traffic, proposed to guarantee certain profits, and to secure the capital of an intended steam packet company, which was to act in connection with the railway. It was held, such a transaction was not within the scope of their powers, and they were restrained by injunction. And in the second place, that in such a case one of the shareholders in the railway company was entitled to sue in behalf of himself and all the other shareholders, except the directors, who were defendants, although some of the shareholders had taken shares in the steam packet company. It was contended in this case that the corporation might pledge, without limit, the funds of the company for the encouragement of other transactions, however various and extensive, provided the object of that liability was to increase the traffic upon the railway, and thereby increase the traffic to the shareholders. But the master of the rolls, Lord Langdale, said, "there was no authority for anything of that kind."

But further, it is not only illegal for a corporation to apply its capital to objects not contemplated by its charter, but also to apply its profits. And therefore a shareholder may maintain a bill in equity against the directors and compel the company to refund any of the profits thus improperly applied. It is an \*improper application for a railway company to invest [ \* 343 ] the profits of the company in the purchase of shares in another company. The dividend (says Lord Langdale, in Solamons v. Laing, 14 Jurist for December, 1850,) which belongs to the shareholders, and is divisible among them, may be applied severally as their own property; but the company itself or the directors, or any number of shareholders, at a meeting or otherwise, have no right to dispose of his shares of the general dividends, which belong to the particular shareholder, in any manner contrary to the will, or without the consent or authority of, that particular shareholder.

We do not mean to say that the jurisdiction in equity over corporations at the suit of a shareholder has not been contested. The cases cited in this argument show it to have been otherwise; but when the case of Hodges v. The New England Screw Company *et al.* was cited against it—(we may say the best argued and judicially considered case which we know upon the point, both upon the original hearing and rehearing of that cause)—the counsel could not have been aware of the fact that, upon the rehearing of it, the

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learned court, which had decided that courts of equity have no jurisdiction over corporations as such at the suit of a stockholder for violations of charter, reviewed and recalled that conclusion. The language of the court is: "We have thought it our duty to review in this general form this new and unsettled jurisdiction, and to say, in view of the novelty and importance of the subject, and the additional light which has been thrown upon it since the trial, we consider the jurisdiction of this court over corporations for breaches of charter, at the suit of shareholders, and how far it shall be extended, and subject to what limits, is still an open question in this court. 1 Rhode Island Reports, 312—rehearing of the case, September term, 1853."

The result of the cases is well stated in Angell & Ames, paragraphs 391, 393. "In cases where the legal remedy against a corporation is inadequate, a court of equity will interfere, is well settled, and there are cases in which a bill in equity will lie against a corporation by one of its members." "Though the result of the authorities clearly is, that in a corporation, when acting within the scope of and in obedience to the provisions of its constitution, the will of the majority, duly expressed at a legally constituted meeting, must govern; yet beyond the limits of the act of incorporation, the will of the majority cannot make an act valid; and the powers of a court of equity may be put in motion at the instance of a single shareholder, if he can show that the corporation are employing their statutory powers for the accomplishment of purposes not within the scope of their institution. Yet [ \* 344 ] it is to be observed, that there is an important \*distinction between this class of cases and those in which there is no breach of trust, but only error and misapprehension, or simple negligence on the part of the directors."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> So it has been repeatedly decided, that a private corporation may be sued at law by one of its own members. The text upon this subject is so well expressed, with authorities to support it, that we will extract the paragraph 390 from Angell & Ames entire. A private corporation may be sued by one of its own members. This point came directly before the court, in the State of South Carolina, in an action of assumpsit against the Catawba Company. The plea in abatement was, that the plaintiff himself was a member of that company, and therefore could maintain no action against it in his individual capacity. The court, after hearing argument, overruled the plea as containing principles subversive of justice; and they moreover said, that the point had been settled by two former cases, wherein certain officers were allowed to maintain actions for their salaries due by the company. In this respect, the cases of incorporated companies are entirely dissimilar from those of ordinary copartnerships, or unincorporated joint-stock companies. In the former, the individual members of the company are entirely distinct from the artificial body endowed with corporate powers. A member of a corporation who is a creditor has the same right as any other creditor to secure

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We have then the rule and its limitation. It is contended that this case is within the limitation; or that the directors of the Commercial Bank of Cleveland, in their action in respect to the tax assessed upon it, under the act of April 18, 1852, and in their refusal to take proper measures for testing its validity, have committed an "error of judgment merely."

It is obvious, from the rule, that the circumstances of each case must determine the jurisdiction of a court of equity to give the relief sought. That the pleadings must be relied upon to collect what they are, to ascertain in what character, and to what end a shareholder invokes the interposition of a court of equity, on account of the mismanagement of a board of directors. Whether such acts are out of or beyond the limits of the act of incorporation, either of commission contrary thereto, or of negligence in not doing what it may be their chartered duty to do.

This brings us to the inquiry, as to what the directors have done in this case, and what they refused to do upon the application of their co-corporator, John M. Woolsey. After a full statement of his case, comprehending all of his rights and theirs also, alleging in his bill that his object was to test the validity of a tax upon the ground that it was unconstitutional, because it impaired the obligation of a contract made by the State of Ohio

\* with the Commercial Bank of Cleveland, and the stock- [ \* 345 ] holders thereof; he represents in his own behalf, as a stockholder, that he had applied to the directors, requesting them to take measures, by suit or otherwise, to prevent the collection of the tax by the treasurer, and that they refused to do so, accompanying, however, their refusal with the declaration that they fully concurred with Woolsey in his views as to the illegality of the tax; that they believed it in no way binding upon the bank, but that, in consideration of the many obstacles in the way of resisting the collection of the tax in the courts of the State, they could not consent to take legal measures for testing it. Besides this refusal, the papers in the case disclose the fact that the directors had previously

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the payment of his demands, by attachment or by levy upon the property of the corporation, although he may be personally liable by statute to satisfy other judgments against the corporation. An action was maintained against a corporation on a bond securing a certain sum to the plaintiff, a member of the corporation, the member being deemed by the court a stranger. *Pierce & Partridge*, 3 Met. Mass. 44; so of notes and bonds, accounts and rights to dividends. *Hill v. Manchester and Salford Water-Works*, 5 Adol. & Ellis, 866; *Dunston v. Imperial Glass Company*, 3 B. & Adol. 125; *Geer v. School District*, 6 Vermont, 187; *Methodist Episcopal Society*, 18 Ib. 405; *Rogers v. Danby Universalist Society*, 19 Ib. 187.



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made two protests against the constitutionality of the tax, because it was repugnant to the constitution of the United States, and to that of Ohio also, both concluding with a resolution that they would not, as then advised, pay the tax, unless compelled by law to do so, and that they were determined to rely upon the constitutional and legal rights of the bank under its charter. Now, in our view, the refusal upon the part of the directors, by their own showing, partakes more of disregard of duty, than of an error of judgment. It was a non-performance of a confessed official obligation, amounting to what the law considers a breach of trust, though it may not involve intentional moral delinquency. It was a mistake, it is true, of what their duty required from them, according to their own sense of it, but, being a duty by their own confession, their refusal was an act outside of the obligation which the charter imposed upon them to protect what they conscientiously believed to be the franchises of the bank. A sense of duty and conduct contrary to it, is not "an error of judgment merely," and cannot be so called in any case. It amounted to an illegal application of the profits due to the stockholders of the bank, into which a court of equity will inquire to prevent its being made.

Thinking, as we do, that the action of the board of directors was not "an error of judgment merely," but a breach of duty, it is our opinion that they were properly made parties to the bill, and that the jurisdiction of a court of equity reaches such a case to give such a remedy as its circumstances may require. This conclusion makes it unnecessary for us to notice further the point made by the counsel that the suit should have been brought in the name of the corporation, in support of which they cited the case of the Bank of the United States v. Osborn. The obvious difference between this case and that is, that the Bank of the United States brought a bill in the circuit court of the United States for the district of Ohio, to resist a tax assessed under an act of that [ \*346 ] State, and executed by its auditor, and here the \*directors of the Commercial Bank of Cleveland, by refusing to do what they had declared it to be their duty to do, have forced one of its corporators, in self-defense, to sue. If the directors had done so in a State court of Ohio, and put their case upon the unconstitutionality of the tax act, because it impaired the obligation of a contract, and had the decision been against such claim, the judgment of the State court could have been re-examined, in that particular, in the supreme court of the United States, under the same authority or jurisdiction by which it reversed the judgment of the supreme court of Ohio, in the case of the Piqua Branch of

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the State Bank of Ohio v. Jacob Knoop, treasurer of Miami county, 16 How. 369.

But it was said in the argument, that this suit had been improperly brought in the circuit court of the United States, because it was a contrivance by Woolsey, or between him and the directors of the bank, to give that court jurisdiction, on account of their residence and citizenship being in different States. That the subject-matter of the suit was within the exclusive jurisdiction of the State courts, and that, if the jurisdiction in the courts of the United States was sustained, it would make inoperative to a great extent the 7th amendment of the constitution of the United States and the 16th section of the judiciary act of 1789, this last being a declaratory act, settling the law, as to cases of equity jurisdiction, in the nature of a proviso, limitation, or exception to its exercise. And further, that it would make the judiciary of the United States paramount to that of the individual States, and the legislative and executive departments of the federal government paramount to the same departments of the individual States.

We first remark as to the imputation of contrivance, that it is the assertion of a fact which does not appear in the case, one which the defendants should have proved if they meant to rely upon it to abate or defeat the complainant's suit, and that, not having done so, as they might have attempted to do, we cannot presume its existence. Mr. Woolsey's right, as a citizen of the State of Connecticut, to sue citizens of the State of Ohio in the courts of the United States, for that State, cannot be questioned. The papers in the case also show, that the directors and himself occupy antagonist grounds in respect to the controversy which their refusal to sue forced him to take in defense of his rights as a shareholder in the bank. Nor can the counsel for the defendant assume the existence of such a fact in the argument of their case in this court, in the absence of any attempt on their part to prove it in the circuit court.

We remark, as to the subject-matter of the suit being within the exclusive jurisdiction of the State courts, that the courts of \*the United States and the courts of the States have [ \* 347 ] concurrent jurisdiction in all cases between citizens of different States, whatever may be the matter in controversy, if it be one for judicial cognizance. Such is the constitution of the United States, and the legislation to congress "in pursuance thereof." And when it was urged that the jurisdiction of the case belonged exclusively to the State courts of Ohio, under the 7th article of the amendments to the constitution, and the 16th section

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of the judiciary act of 1789 was invoked to sustain the position, it seems it was forgotten that this court and other courts of the United States had repeatedly decided that the equity jurisdiction of the courts of the United States is independent of the local law of any State, and is the same in nature and extent as the equity jurisdiction of England, from which it is derived, and that it is no objection to this jurisdiction, that there is a remedy under the local law. *Gordon v. Hobart*, 2 Sumner C. C. Rep. 401.

It was also said by both of the counsel for the defendant, and argued with some zeal, that if the court sustained the jurisdiction in this case, it would be difficult to determine whether anything, and how much of State sovereignty may hereafter exist. We shall give to this observation our particular consideration, regretting that it should be necessary, but not doubting that such a jurisdiction exists at the suit of a shareholder, and that the appellate jurisdiction of this court may be exercised in the matter, not only without taking away any of the rights of the States, but, by doing so, giving additional securities for their preservation, to the great benefit of the people of the United States. If it does not exist and was not exercised, we should indeed have a very imperfect national government, altogether unworthy of the wisdom and foresight of those who framed it; incompetent, too, to secure for the future those advantages hitherto secured by it to the people of the United States, and which were in their contemplation, when, by their conventions in the several States, the constitution was ratified.

Impelled then by a sense of duty to the constitution, and the administration of so much of it as has been assigned to the judiciary, we proceed with the discussion.

The departments of the government are legislative, executive, and judicial. They are co-ordinate in degree to the extent of the powers delegated to each of them. Each, in the exercise of its powers, is independent of the other, but all, rightfully done by either, is binding upon the others. The constitution is supreme over all of them, because the people who ratified it have made it so; consequently, anything which may be done unauthorized by it is unlawful. But it is not only over the departments

[ \* 348 ] of \* the government that the constitution is supreme. It

is so, to the extent of its delegated powers, over all who made themselves parties to it; States as well as persons, within those concessions of sovereign powers yielded by the people of the States, when they accepted the constitution in their conventions. Nor does its supremacy end there. It is supreme over the people of the United States, aggregately and in their separate sovereign-

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ties, because they have excluded themselves from any direct or immediate agency in making amendments to it, and have directed that amendments should be made representatively for them, by the congress of the United States, when two thirds of both houses shall propose them; or where the legislatures of two thirds of the several States shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, become valid, to all intents and purposes, as a part of the constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by conventions in three fourths of them, as one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by congress. The same article declares that no amendment, which might be made prior to the year 1808, should, in any manner, affect the first and fourth clauses in the ninth section of the first article, and that no State, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the senate. The first being a temporary disability to amend, and the other two permanent and unalterable exceptions to the power of amendment.

Now, whether such a supremacy of the constitution, with its limitations in the particulars just mentioned, and with the further restriction laid by the people upon themselves, and for themselves, as to the modes of amendment, be right or wrong politically, no one can deny that the constitution is supreme, as has been stated, and that the statement is in exact conformity with it.

Further, the constitution is not only supreme in the sense we have said it was, for the people in the ratification of it, have chosen to add that, "this constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land, and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding." And, in that connection, to make its supremacy more complete, impressive, and practical, that there should be no escape from its operation, and that its binding force upon the States and the members of congress should be unmistakable, it is declared that "the senators and representatives, before mentioned, and the members of the State legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of \* the several States, shall be bound [ \* 349 ] by an oath or affirmation to support this constitution."

Having stated, not by way of argument or inference, but in the words of the constitution, the particulars in which it is declared to be supreme, we proceed to show that it contains an interpreter, or has given directions for determining what is its meaning and oper-

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ation, what "laws are made in pursuance thereof," and to fix the meaning of treaties which had been made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, when either the constitution, the laws of congress, or a treaty, are brought judicially in question, in which a State, or a citizen of the United States, or a foreigner, shall claim rights before the courts of the United States, or in the courts of the States, either under the constitution or the laws of the United States, or from a treaty.

All legislative powers in the constitution are vested in a congress of the United States, which shall consist of a senate and house of representatives. Then stating of whom the house shall be composed, how they shall be chosen by the people of the several States, the qualifications of electors, the age of representatives, the time of their citizenship, and their inhabitancy in the State in which they shall be chosen; how representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned, how the senate shall be composed, with sundry other provisions relating to the house and the senate, the powers of congress are enumerated affirmatively. The 9th section then declares what the congress shall not have power to do, and it is followed by the 10th, consisting of three paragraphs, all of them prohibitions upon the States from doing the particulars expressed in them.

Our first suggestion now is, as all the legislative powers are concessions of sovereignty from the people of the States, and the prohibitions upon them in the 10th section are likewise so, both raise an obligation upon the States not to legislate upon either; each, however, conferring rights, according to what may be the constitutional legislation of congress upon the first; and the second giving rights of equal force, without legislation in respect to such of them as execute themselves, on account of their being prohibitions of what the States shall not do. For instance, no legislation by congress is wanted to make more binding upon the States what they have bound themselves in absolute terms not to do. As where it is said, "no State shall enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation, grant letters of marque and reprisal, coin money, emit bills of credit, make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts, pass any bill of attainder, *ex post facto* law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, or grant any title of nobility."

[ \* 350 ] \* Our next suggestion is, that the grants of legislative powers, and the negation of the exercise of other powers by the States, some of them being declarations that they would not legislate upon those matters which had been exclusively given up for the legislation of congress, do not imply that the States would

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be willfully disregarded of the obligations solemnly placed upon them by their people; but that there might be interferences from their legislation in some of those particulars, either with the constitution, or between their enactments and those of congress. But this apprehension (not without cause) was founded upon the legislation of some of the States during the continuance of the articles of confederation, affecting the rights and interests of persons in their contracts, from which they could get no relief, unless it was granted by the same State legislatures which passed the acts. This suggested the necessity, or rather made it obvious, that our national union would be incomplete and altogether insufficient for the great ends contemplated, unless a constitutional arbiter was provided to give certainty and uniformity, in all of the States, to the interpretation of the constitution and the legislation of congress; with powers also to declare judicially what acts of the legislatures of the States might be in conflict with either. Had this not been done, there would have been no mutuality of constitutional obligation between the States, either in respect to the constitution or the laws of congress, and each of them would have determined for itself the operation of both, either by legislation or judicial action. In either way, exempting itself and its citizens from engagements which it had not made by itself, but in common with other States of the union, equally sovereign; by which they bound their sovereignties to each other, that neither of them should assume to settle a principle or interest for itself, in a matter which was the common interest of all of them. Such is certainly the common sense view of the people, when any number of them enter into a contract for their mutual benefit, in the same proportions of interest. In such a case, neither should assume the right to bind his compeers by his judgment, as to the stipulations of their contract. If one of them did so, any other of them might call in the aid of the law to settle their differences, and its judgment would terminate the controversy. It must not be said that the illustration is inappropriate, because individuals have no other mode to settle their disputes, and that States and nations, from their equal sovereignty, have no tribunal to terminate authoritatively their differences, each having the right to judge and do so for itself.

But ours is not such a government. The States, or rather the people forming it, though sovereign as to the powers not delegated \* to the United States by the constitution, nor [ \* 351 ] prohibited by it to the States, are not independent of each other, in respect to the powers ceded in the constitution.

Their union, by the constitution, was made by each of them con-



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ceding portions of their equal sovereignties for all of them, and it acts upon the States conjunctively and separately, and in the same manner upon their citizens, aggregately in some things, and in others individually, in many of their relations of business, and also upon their civil conduct, so far as their obedience to the laws of congress is concerned. •

In such a union, the States are bound by all of those principles of justice which bind individuals to their contracts. They are bound by their mutual acquiescence in the powers of the constitution, that neither of them should be the judge, or should be allowed to be the final judge of the powers of the constitution, or of the interpretation of the laws of congress. This is not so, because their sovereignty is impaired; but the exercise of it is diminished in quantity, because they have, in certain respects, put restraints upon that exercise, in virtue of voluntary engagements. (Vattel, ch. 1, section 10.)

We will now give two illustrations—one from the constitution, and the other from one of the cases decided in this court, upon a tax act of the State of Ohio—to show that the framers of the constitution, and the conventions which ratified it, were fully aware of the necessity for and meant to make a department of it, to which was to be confided the final decision judicially of the powers of that instrument, the conformity of laws with it, which either congress or the legislatures of the States may enact, and to review the judgments of the State courts, in which a right is decided against, which has been claimed in virtue of the constitution or the laws of congress.

The third clause of the 2d section of the 1st article of the constitution is, “that representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several States, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other persons.” We will suppose that congress shall again impose a direct tax, and that a citizen liable to assessment should dispute its application to a kind of his property, alleging it not to be a direct tax, in the sense of that provision of the constitution; and that he should apply to a State court for relief from an execution which had been levied upon his property for its collection, making the United States collector of the tax a party to his suit; and that the court should enjoin him from further proceedings to collect the [ \* 352 ] tax. It is plain, if such a judgment was final, \*and could not be reviewed by any other court, or by the supreme

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court of the United States, in virtue of its appellate jurisdiction, as that has been given by the act of congress, the result would be, that the citizens of the State in which the judgment was given, would be exempted from the payment of a tax which had been intended by congress to be apportioned upon the property of all of the citizens of the United States, in conformity with the constitution. This would practically defeat the rule of apportionment if it was acquiesced in by the government of the United States, and the constitutional collection of the tax could not be made in any State according to the act. We do not mean that the officers of the United States could not collect the tax in those States in which no such judgment had been given; but if the judgment could not be reviewed, that the constitutional rule for the imposition of direct taxes could not be executed by any legislation of congress which a State legislature or State court might not say was unconstitutional. We should not then have a more perfect union than we had under the articles of confederation. Each State then paid the requisition of congress, when it pleased to do so. Had it been continued, the union would be more feeble for all national purposes than it had been. Then the States only disregarded their obligations to suit their convenience. Had it not been corrected, as it has been done in the constitution, we have no reason to believe that there would not be like results, or that the courts of the States would not be resorted to, to determine the constitutionality of taxes laid by congress. This was certainly not meant by the framers of the constitution, nor can its disallowance be brought under the 10th article of its amendments, which declares "that the powers not delegated to the United States by the constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

The illustration given, and its results, have been drawn from the constitution of the United States, also from what might be the action of the State legislatures and State courts, which could not be prevented unless the supreme court of the United States had the power to review the action of the State courts upon a matter exclusively of national interest, made so by the legislation of congress.

Hitherto, no such case as we have supposed has happened, but a reference to the case of *Hylton v. The United States*, 3 Dallas, 171, in which an attempt was made to test the constitutionality of a tax assessed by the United States, will show that a case of the kind is not unlikely to occur, when congress shall impose a tax apportioning representation and direct taxation; or, under the general declaration in the 8th section of the 1st article of the

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[ \* 353 ] \* constitution, that "congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, but that all duties shall be uniform throughout the United States." Let it be understood, too, that the power is not only to impose duties and taxes, but to collect them, and from the power to collect must necessarily be inferred the disability of the legislatures of the States, or of the courts of the States, in any way to interfere with its execution, as that may be directed by congress. If the courts of the States, or their legislatures, could finally determine against the constitutionality of a tax laid by congress, there would be no certainty or uniformity of taxation upon the citizens of the United States, or of the apportionment of representation and direct taxation according to the constitution.

Other illustrations of the propriety and necessity for a judicial tribunal of the United States to settle such questions finally, might be made from other clauses of the constitution. We will, however, cite but one of them in addition to such as have been already mentioned. It is the power of congress to regulate commerce, and we refer to the case of *Brown v. The State of Maryland*, as an instance of the attempt of that State to lay a tax upon imports, which this court pronounced to be unconstitutional.

We will now give other illustrations, in which the rights of property are involved, to show the cautious wisdom of that provision of the constitution which secures to the citizens of the different States a right to sue in the courts of the United States, and to claim either in them, or in the courts of the States, the protection either of the constitution or of the laws of congress.

The legislature of Ohio passed an act in 1803, incorporating the proprietors of the half million of acres of land south of Lake Erie called the "Sufferers' Land." This act required the appointment of directors, who were authorized to extinguish the Indian title, to survey the land into townships, or otherwise make partition among the owners; and, among other things provided, "that, to defray all necessary expenses of the company in purchasing and extinguishing the Indian claim of title to the land, surveying, locating, and making partition, and all other necessary expenses of said company, power is hereby vested in the said directors, and their successors in office, to levy a tax or taxes on said land, and enforce the collection thereof." It was also provided that the directors should have power and authority to do whatever it shall appear to them to be necessary and proper to be done for the well-ordering and interest of the proprietors, not contrary to the laws of the State. Subsequently, the legislature of Ohio imposed a tax upon these

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lands as a part of the revenue to be raised for the State. The directors assessed a tax upon \*the share of each pro- [ \* 354 ] prietor, to pay the tax to the State. A sale of a part of the land was made for that purpose, and the question subsequently raised in the circuit court of the United States for the district of Ohio, in a suit at the instance of the heirs of one of the proprietors whose land had been sold, was, whether the sale conveyed a title to the land to the purchaser. It was determined by this court, that it did not, because the directors had not power to make an assessment upon the lands to pay the State tax, and that the tax, as laid by the State, had been done in violation of the corporate powers given to the directors. In this case the plaintiffs sought protection against the tax laid by Ohio, and acquiesced in by the directors of the corporation, because that tax was contrary to the contract which the State had made with the corporation for the benefit of the proprietors of the land. The State, without being a party to the record, was interested in the question. It was a suit between citizens of different States, brought by the plaintiffs in the United States circuit court for Ohio; and the motive for seeking that tribunal was, that his rights might be tried in one not subject either to State or local influences. It placed both parties upon an equality, in fact and in appearances; and whatever might have been the result, neither could complain of the disinterestedness of the court which adjudged their rights. *Beatty v. The Lessee of Knowles*, 4 Peters, 152.

The foundation of the right of citizens of different States to sue each other in the courts of the United States, is not an unworthy jealousy of the impartiality of the State tribunals. It has a higher aim and purpose. It is to make the people think and feel, though residing in different States of the Union, that their relations to each other were protected by the strictest justice, administered in courts independent of all local control or connection with the subject-matter of the controversy between the parties to a suit.

Men unite in civil society, expecting to enjoy peaceably what belongs to them, and that they may regain it by the law when wrongfully withheld. That can only be accomplished by good laws, with suitable provisions for the establishment of courts of justice, and for the enforcement of their decisions. The right to establish them flows from the same source which determines the extent of the legislative and executive powers of government. Experience has shown that the object cannot be attained without a supreme tribunal, as one of the departments of the government, with defined powers in its organic structure, and the mode for exer-

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cising them to be provided legislatively. This has been done in the constitution of the United States. Its framers were well aware of their responsibilities to secure justice to the people; [ \* 355 ] \* and well knew, as the object of all trials in courts was to determine the suits between citizens, that it could not be done satisfactorily to them, unless they had the privilege to appeal from the first tribunal which had jurisdiction of a suit to another which should have authority to pronounce definitely upon its merits. (Vattel, 9th chapter, on justice and polity.) Without such a court the citizens of each State could not have enjoyed all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States, as they were intended to be secured by the second section of the 4th article of the constitution. Nor would the judicial power have been extended in fact to "all cases in law and equity arising under the constitution, the laws of the United States, and treaties made or which shall be made under their authority, to all cases affecting ambassadors and other public ministers and consuls; to all cases of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction; to controversies to which the United States shall be a party; to controversies between two or more States; to those between citizens of different States, or between citizens of the same State, claiming lands under grants of different States; and between a State and the citizens thereof and foreign States, citizens or subjects." Article 3d, section first.

Without the supreme court, as it has been constitutionally and legislatively constituted, neither the constitution nor the laws of congress passed in pursuance of it, nor treaties, would be in practice or in fact the supreme law of the land, and the injunction that the judges in every State should be bound thereby, anything in the constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding, would be useless, if the judges of State courts, in any one of the States, could finally determine what was the meaning and operation of the constitution and laws of congress, or the extent of the obligation of treaties.

But let it be remembered, that the appellate jurisdiction of the supreme court, as it is, is one of perfect equality between the States and the United States. It acts upon the constitution and laws of both, in the same way, to the same extent, for the same purposes, and with the same final result. Neither the dignity nor the independence of either are lessened by its organization or action.

The same electors choose the members of the house of representatives, who choose the members of the most popular branch of the State legislatures. The senators of the United States are chosen by the legislatures of the States. The senate and house of repre-

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representatives of the United States exercise their legislative powers independently of each other, their concurrence being necessary to pass laws. The States are represented in the one, the people in the other and in both. But as it was thought that \* they and the State legislatures might pass laws conflict- [\* 356] ing with the letter or spirit of the constitution under which they legislated, it became necessary to make a judicial department for the United States, with a jurisdiction best suited to preserve harmony between the States, severally and collectively, with the national government, and which would give the people of all of the States that confidence and security under it anticipated by them when they announced, "that we, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice and domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, and promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain this constitution for the United States." Without a judicial department, just such as it is, neither the powers of the constitution nor the purposes for which they were given could have been attained.

We do not know a case more appropriate to show the necessity for such a jurisdiction than that before us.

A citizen of the United States, residing in Connecticut, having a large pecuniary interest in a bank in Ohio, with a board of directors opposed, in fact, to the only course which could be taken to test the constitutional validity of a law of that State bearing upon the franchises of their corporation, is told by the directors, that though they fully concur with him in believing the tax law of Ohio unconstitutional and in no way binding upon the bank, they will not institute legal proceedings to prevent the collection of the tax, "in consideration of the many obstacles in the way of resisting the tax in the State courts." Without partaking, ourselves in their uncertainty of relief in the courts of Ohio, it must be admitted their declaration was calculated to diminish this suitor's confidence in such a result, and to induce him to resort to the only other tribunal which there was to take cognizance of his cause. Besides, it was not his interest alone which would be affected by the result. Hundreds, citizens of the State of Ohio and citizens of other States, are concerned in the question. Millions of money in that State, and millions upon millions of banking capital in the other States, are to be affected by its judicial decision; all depending upon the assertion, in opposition to the claim of the complainant, that a new constitution of a State supercedes every legislative enactment touching its own internal policy,



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and bearing upon the interest of persons, which may have been the subject of legislation under a preceding constitution. In the words of the counsel for the defendant, that all such legislation must give way when found to contravene the will of the sovereign people, subsequently expressed in a new State constitution.

The assertion may be met and confuted, without further [ \* 357 ] argument, by what \* was said by Mr. Madison in the 43d number of The Federalist, upon the 6th article of the constitution, which is: "All debts and engagements entered into before the adoption of this constitution shall be as valid against the United States under this constitution as under the confederation." His remark is: "This can only be considered as a declaratory proposition, and may have been inserted, among other reasons, for the satisfaction of foreign creditors, who cannot be strangers to the pretended doctrine, that a change in the political form of civil society has the magical effect of dissolving its moral obligations."

And here we will cite another passage from the writings of that great statesman, and venerated man by every citizen of the United States who knows how much his political wisdom contributed to the establishment of our American popular institutions. He says, in the 22d number of The Federalist: "A circumstance which shows the defects of the confederation remains to be mentioned—the want of a judiciary power. Laws are a dead letter without courts to expound and define their true meaning and operation. The treaties of the United States, to have any force at all, must be considered as a part of the law of the land. Their true import, as regards individuals, must, like all other laws, be ascertained by judicial determinations. To produce uniformity in these determinations, they ought to be submitted to a supreme tribunal; and this tribunal ought to be instituted under the same authorities which form the treaties themselves. These ingredients are both indispensable. If there is in each State a court of final jurisdiction, there may be as many different final determinations on the same point as there are courts. There are endless diversities in the opinions of men. We often see not only different courts, but the judges of the same court, differing from each other. To avoid the confusion which would unavoidably result from the contradictory decisions of a number of independent judicatures, all nations have found it necessary to establish one tribunal paramount to the rest, possessing a general superintendence, and authorized to settle and declare in the last resort a uniform rule of civil justice. This is the more necessary where the frame of the government is so compounded

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that the laws of the whole are in danger of being contravened by the laws of the parts. In this case, if the particular tribunals are invested with a right of ultimate decision, besides the contradictions to be expected from difference of opinion, there will be much to fear from the bias of local views and prejudices, and from the interference of local institutions. As often as such an interference should happen, there would be reason to apprehend that the provisions of the particular laws might be preferred to those of the general laws, \*from the deference which men in office [ \* 358 ] naturally look up to that authority to which they owe their official existence."

Hitherto we have shown from the constitution itself that the framers of it meant to provide a jurisdiction for its final interpretation, and for the laws passed by congress, to give them an equal operation in all of the States.

But there are considerations out of the constitution which contribute to show it, which we will briefly mention. Without such a judicial tribunal there are no means provided by which the conflicting legislation of the States with the constitution and the laws of congress may be terminated, so as to give to either a national operation in each of the States. In such an event no means have been provided for an amicable accommodation; none for a compromise; none for mediation; none for arbitration; none for a congress of the States as a mode of conciliation. The consequence of which would be a permanent diversity of the operation of the constitution in the States, as well in matters exclusively of public concern as in those which secure individual rights. Fortunately it is not so. A supreme tribunal has been provided, which has hitherto, by its decisions, settled all differences which have arisen between the authorities of the States and those of the United States. The legislation under which its appellate power is exercised has been of sixty-seven years' duration, without any countenanced attempt to repeal it. It is rather late to question it; and in continuing to exercise it, this court complies with the decisions of its predecessors, believing, after the fullest examination, that its appellate jurisdiction is given in conformity with the constitution.

The last position taken by the counsel for the defendant, now the appellant here, is, that George C. Dodge was in the discharge of his official duty as treasurer of Cuyahoga county, in the State of Ohio, when interrupted by the mandate of the circuit court; that the tax in his hands for collection against the bank was regularly assessed under a valid law of the State, passed April 18, 1852, in

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conformity with the requisitions of the constitution, adopted June 17, 1851, which took effect 1st September, 1851.

It was admitted, in the argument of it, that the only difference between this case and that of the Piqua Branch of the State Bank of Ohio v. Jacob Knoop, 16 Howard, 369, is, that the latter was a claim for a tax under a law of Ohio, of March 21, 1851, under the former constitution of Ohio, of 1802; and that the tax now claimed is assessed under the act of April 18, 1852, under the new constitution of Ohio.

Both acts, in effect, are the same in their operation upon the charter of the bank, as that was passed by the general [ \* 359 ] assembly of Ohio, in the year 1845. Each of them is intended to collect, by way of tax, a larger sum than the bank was liable to pay, under the charter of 1845. This is admitted. It is not denied, the record shows that the tax assessed for the year 1853 exceeds the sum to which it was liable, under its charter, \$11,565 $\frac{22}{100}$ . The tax assessed is \$14,771 $\frac{87}{100}$ . The tax which it would have paid, under the act of 1845, would have been \$3,206 $\frac{65}{100}$ .

The fact raises the question whether the tax now claimed has not been assessed in violation of the 10th section of the 1st article of the constitution, which declares that no State shall pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts.

The law of 1845 was an agreement with the bank, *quasi ex contractu*—and also an agreement separately with the shareholders, *quasi ex contractu*—that neither the bank as such, nor the shareholders as such, should be liable to any other tax larger than that which was to be levied under the 60th section of the act of 1845.

That 60th section is, “that each banking company under the act, on accepting thereof and complying with its provisions, shall semi-annually, on the days designated for declaring dividends, set off to the State six per cent. on the profits, deducting therefrom the expenses and ascertained losses of the company for the six months next preceding, which sum or amount so set off shall be in lieu of all taxes to which the company, or the stockholders therein, would otherwise be subject. The sum so set off to be paid to the treasurer, on the order of the auditor of the State.” The act under which the tax of 1853 has been assessed is: “That the president and cashier of every bank and banking company that shall have been, or may hereafter be, incorporated by the laws of this State, and having the right to issue bills of circulation as money, shall make and return, under oath, to the auditor of the county in which such bank or banking company may be situated,

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in the month of May annually, a written statement containing, first, the average amount of notes and bills discounted or purchased, which amount shall include all the loans or discounts, whether originally made or renewed during the year aforesaid, or at any previous time, whether made on bills of exchange, notes, bonds, or mortgages, or any other evidence of indebtedness, at their actual cost value in money, whether due previous to, during, or after the period aforesaid, and on which such banking company has at any time reserved or received, or is entitled to receive, any profit or other consideration whatever; and, secondly, the average amount of all other moneys, effects, or dues of every description belonging to the bank or banking company, loaned, invested, or otherwise used with a view to profit, or upon which the bank, &c., receives, or is entitled to receive, interest."

\* The two acts have been put in connection, that the [ \* 360 ] difference between the modes of taxation may be more obvious; and it will be readily seen, that the second is not intended to tax the profits of the bank, but its entire business, capital, circulation, credits, and debts due to it, being professed to be intended to equalize the tax to be paid by the bank with that required to be paid upon personal property. A careful examination of the two acts, and of the tabular returns annexed to this opinion, will prove that such equality of taxation has not been attained. It will show that the bank is taxed more than three times the number of mills upon the dollars that is assessed upon personal property, whatever may be comprehended under that denomination by the act of the 13th April, 1852. But if it did not, it could make no difference in our conclusion. For the tax to be paid by the bank under the act of 24th February, 1824, is a legislative contract, equally operative upon the State and upon the bank, and the stockholders of the bank, until the expiration of its charter, which will be in 1866. No critical examination of the words, "that on the days designated for declaring dividends, to wit, on the first Monday in May and November of each year, the bank shall set off to the said State of Ohio six per cent. on the profits, deducting therefrom the expenses and ascertained losses of said company for six months next preceding each dividend day, and that the sums or amounts so set off shall be in lieu of all taxes to which said company or the stockholders thereof, on account of stock owned therein, would otherwise be subject," could make them more exact in meaning than they are. The words "would otherwise be subject," relate to the legislative power to tax, and is a relinquishment of it, binding upon that legislature which passed the act, and upon succeeding

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legislatures as a contract not to tax the bank during its continuance with more than six per cent. upon its semi-annual profits. A change of constitution cannot release a State from contracts made under a constitution which permits them to be made. The inquiry is, is the contract permitted by the existing constitution? If so, and that cannot be denied in this case, the sovereignty which ratified it in 1802 was the same sovereignty which made the constitution of 1851, neither having more power than the other to impair a contract made by the State legislature with individuals. The moral obligations never die. If broken by states and nations, though the terms of reproach are not the same with which we are accustomed to designate the faithlessness of individuals, the violation of justice is not the less.

This case is coincident with that of the Piqua Branch of the State Bank of Ohio v. Knoop, 16 How. 369, decided by [\* 361] this \* court in the year 1853. It rules this in every particular; and to the opinion then given we have nothing to add, nor anything to take away. We affirm the decree of the circuit court, and direct a mandate accordingly.

Mr. Justice CATRON, Mr. Justice DANIEL, and Mr. Justice CAMPBELL dissented.

(No. 1.)

*Statement of the Commercial Branch Bank, Cleveland, made to the Auditor of Cuyahoga county, May 25, 1853.*

1st. The average amount of notes and bills discounted and purchased by the Commercial Branch Bank of Cleveland, including all loans or discounts whether made or renewed during the year, from May 1st, 1852, to May 1st, 1853, inclusive, is.....	\$582,735
2d. The average amount of all other moneys, effects, or dues of every description belonging to said Commercial Branch Bank, loaned, invested, or otherwise used or employed with a view to profit, or upon which said bank received, or was entitled to receive, interest during the above period, was.....	88,714
Total.....	<u>\$671,449</u>

W. A. OTIS, *President.*

F. P. HANDY, *Cashier.*

STATE OF OHIO, *Cuyahoga county, ss.*

CLEVELAND, *May 25, 1853.*

Personally appeared William A. Otis, president, and Freeman P. Handy, cashier of the Commercial Branch Bank of Cleveland, and made oath that the aforesaid statement is true and correct, according to their best knowledge and belief.

Before me, witness my hand.

JOHN T. NEWTON, *Notary Public.*

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The following resolutions have been adopted by the directors of this bank:

*Resolved*, That in the opinion of the directors of the Commercial Branch Bank of Cleveland, that the act for the assessment and taxation of all property in this State, and for levying taxes thereon according to its true value in money, passed April 13, 1852, so far as it imposes a tax on this bank or banking company, or the listing or valuing of its property different from that required by its charter, without the consent of the corporators, is unconstitutional and void, and is also repugnant to the constitution of the State of Ohio—which declares that all laws shall be passed taxing by uniform rule all investments in stock or otherwise, and that property employed in banking shall bear a burden of taxation equal to that imposed on the property of individuals; and, again—that the property of corporations now existing or hereafter created, shall be forever subject to taxation the same as the property of individuals, and therefore creates no legal liability against this bank, and that this bank will not, as at present advised, pay such additional tax unless compelled by law, and hereby enters its protest against its imposition and collection.

*Resolved*, That the cashier attach a copy of these resolutions, signed by the president and cashier of this bank, to the return of this bank, made under said law. Also file a copy so attested with the treasurer of this county, and transmit a like copy to the \* auditor of state, as evidence of the dissent of this bank [ \* 362 ] from all the provisions of said law, and its determination to rely upon the constitution and legal rights of this bank under its charter.

F. P. HANDY, *Cashier*.

W. A. OTIS, *President*.

COMMERCIAL BRANCH BANK, *Cleveland, May 25, 1853.*

AUDITOR'S OFFICE, CUYAHOGA COUNTY,  
*Cleveland, February 22, 1856.*

I hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true copy of the statement of the Commercial Branch Bank, made to the auditor of Cuyahoga county, May 25, 1853.

WILLIAM FULLER, *County Auditor*.

(No. 2.)

AUDITOR'S OFFICE, CUYAHOGA COUNTY,  
*Cleveland, February 22, 1856.*

I hereby certify, that there was entered upon the tax duplicate of this county, for the year 1853, for taxation, in the name of the Commercial Branch Bank of Cleveland, the sum of six hundred seventy-one thousand four hundred and forty-nine dollars, in accordance with the statement of said bank, made to the auditor of said county, May 25, 1853.

And that the amount of taxes assessed thereon in said year, for State, county, city, and road purposes, is fourteen thousand seven hundred and seventy-one dollars eighty-seven cents and seven mills, (\$14,771 87 7,) as follows.

WILLIAM FULLER, *County Auditor*.

Owners' Name.	Personal prop'y.	Value—dolls.	Total taxes on duplicate.	State, county, and city taxes.	Road tax.
			Dolls. Cts. Ms.	Dolls. Cts. Ms.	Dolls. Cts. Ms.
Commercial Branch Bank.....	.....	671,449	14,771 87 7	14,234 71 8	537 15 9



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Mr. Justice CAMPBELL dissenting.

The following case is made upon the record of this cause:

The Commercial Bank of Cleveland, Ohio, was organized in 1845, according to the act of the general assembly of February, 1845, for the incorporation of the State Bank of Ohio and other companies, with a capital which was increased in 1848 to \$175,000, and placed under the management of five directors.

From its organization until 1851 the taxes of the bank were determined by the 60th section of the act aforesaid, which required the banks semi-annually to set off to the State six per cent. of the net profits for the six months next preceding, and

[ \* 363 ] \* the sum so set off the act declared should be "in lieu of

all taxes to which such company or the stockholders thereof on account of stock owned therein would otherwise be subject." In the year 1851 the general assembly of Ohio altered this rule of taxation, and required that the capital stock, surplus and contingent funds of the banks should be listed for taxation at their money value, and should be assessed for the same purposes and to the same extent that personal property might be in the place of their location.

During the same year the people of Ohio, in the mode prescribed in their fundamental law, adopted a new constitution. One of the articles (art. 12, § 3) requires "the general assembly to provide by law for taxing the notes and bills discounted or purchased, and all other property, effects, dues of every description (without deduction) of all banks now existing or hereafter created, and of all bankers, so that all property employed in banking shall always bear a burden of taxation equal to that imposed on the property of individuals." In 1852, the general assembly fulfilled this direction by a law which required the banks to disclose the average amount of all bills, notes discounted or purchased, and the average amount of their moneys, dues and effects, so as to afford a basis for taxation; and by the same act taxes were directed to be laid upon these amounts without deduction.

The directors, stockholders, and officers of this bank have disputed the validity of these changes in the rule of taxation, as violating a right derived by contract, obligatory on the State, and contained in the 60th section of the act first mentioned, and no voluntary obedience has been rendered to them; but, on the contrary, the successive measures taken for the collection of these taxes have met with opposition from the corporation, and submission has always been accompanied with a protest on the part of the directors, in which their determination was expressed to rely upon the constitutional and legal rights of the bank.

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The taxes for the year 1852 were collected in current bank bills, and the packages were prepared and placed within the reach of the treasurer, who held the duplicate for collection, by the officers of the bank, and immediately after they were assigned by the bank to one Deshler, who replevied the same by a writ from the circuit court of the United States for Ohio, and thus made a case which subsequently came to this court. *Deshler v. Dodge*, 16 How. 622.

In December, 1853, some five days before the taxes were payable, John M. Woolsey, a stockholder of the bank for thirty shares, at the par value of \$100 each, addressed the directors of the bank a letter, requiring them "to institute the proper legal proceedings to prevent the collection" of the assessment for [\* 364] that year, averring that the bank was not bound to pay them. The board of directors replied, "that they considered the tax to have been illegally assessed, but in consideration of the many obstacles in the way of resisting said tax in the courts of Ohio they could not take the action they were called upon in the letter to take," but must leave to Mr. Woolsey to take such a course as he might be advised. It sufficiently appears that the treasurer is able to pay any damages which the bank might sustain, and no evidence exists of any indisposition of the directors to meet all the obligations of their station, except what is found in the letter I have described.

This bill was filed by Woolsey, as a stockholder of the bank, against the treasurer of the county of Cuyahoga, the five directors of the bank, and the corporation itself, alleging his apprehensions that the treasurer would proceed to make the collection of the excess above the tax due under the 60th section, and that it would impair the credit of the bank, invade its franchise, and ultimately compel its dissolution; and that the directors had refused to take measures to prevent its collection, on his requisition, and prays for an injunction on the officer to restrain his further proceedings. The circuit court affirmed the bill so as to restrain the collection of all taxes assessed upon the bank, except such as were laid under the act of 1845.

The first inquiry that arises is, has this court a jurisdiction of the parties to the suit? The case is one of a stockholder of a corporation, bringing the corporation before the courts of the United States to redress a corporate wrong in which both are similarly interested. The early decisions of this court on this question would be conclusive against the bill. They require that the plaintiff should be from a State different from all the individual members of the corporation. The chief justice said, that invisible, intangi-

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ble, and artificial being, that mere legal entity—a corporation aggregate—is certainly not a citizen; and consequently cannot sue or be sued in the courts of the United States, unless the rights of the members in this respect can be exercised in their corporate name. 5 Cranch, 57, 61, 78; 6 Wheat. 450; 14 Pet. 60.

These cases required that the citizenship of all the corporators should appear on the record, so that the court might be sure that the controversy had arisen between citizens of different States, or citizens of a State and foreign states, citizens or subjects. In *Marshall v. Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co.* 16 How. 314, the court relaxed its strictness in reference to this averment, and was satisfied by an allegation of the habitat of the corporation, but still

intimated that the national character of the corporators [ \* 365 ] \* was an essential subject of inquiry in a question of jurisdiction. The court says: “The persons who act under

these faculties and use the corporate name, may be justly presumed to be resident in the State which is the necessary habitat of the corporation, and where alone they can be made subject to suit, and should be estopped in equity from averring a different domicile as against those who are compelled to seek them there, and nowhere else.” And again: “The presumption arising from the habitat of a corporation being conclusive of those who use the corporate name and exercise the faculties of it.”

This case is one of a corporator suing the corporation of which he is a member, and is the first instance of such a case in the court. He cannot aver against the manifest truth, that all the corporators, himself included, are of a different State from himself, to give the court jurisdiction upon the principle of the earlier cases. And if the doctrine of an equitable estoppel can be applied to a subject where facts, and not arbitrary presumptions, were the only objects of consideration; and if, indeed, the character of the corporator, as a matter of law, is to be assumed to be that of the *situs* of the corporation, then all the corporators, plaintiffs as well as defendants, stand upon this record as citizens of the same State, and this suit cannot be maintained. But if no inquiry into the citizenship of stockholders may be made; if a foreign stockholder, upon the real or affected indifference of a board of directors, or on some imaginary or actual obstacle to relief, arising in the state of opinion in the courts of the State, can draw questions of equitable cognizance into the courts of the United States, in which corporate rights are involved, or evils are threatened or inflicted on corporate property, making the corporation and its managers parties, then a very compendious method of bringing into the courts of the United States

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all questions in which these artificial beings are concerned has been invented, and the most morbid appetite for jurisdiction among all their various members will be gratified, and upon a class of cases where grave doubts exist whether those who made the constitution ever intended to confer any jurisdiction whatever. Nor can this jurisdiction be supported by affirming that the corporation is not a necessary party to the bill. The subject of the bill is the title of the corporation to an exemption under the act of incorporation, and its object is the protection of corporate franchises and property. The being of the corporation is charged to be an issue involved in the prayer for relief, and the inaction of the directors affords the motive for the suit.

The conduct of the directors was determined in the course of their duty as the governing body of the corporation, under the law of their organization. Their measures and judgments were \* the acts of the corporation. Whether these were [ \* 366 ] conclusive upon the corporators, or whether they might be impeached at the suit of a single dissenting shareholder; whether the relations between the State and the corporation were to be settled in a suit between them or in this suit, are the matters in issue, and the corporation was an essential party to their adjudication. The principle of the bill is, that in declining to take effective measures of prevention—that is, refusing to apply for an injunction—the directors abdicated their controlling powers, and any stockholder became entitled to intervene for the interests of himself and his associates. The decree in this cause is not a decree for the relief of this corporator, but is a decree for the corporation, and does not differ from a decree proper to a case of the corporation against the treasurer. It is clear, therefore, that the corporation was a necessary party to the bill, and so are the adjudged cases. *Bagshaw v. East. Union R. R. Co.* 7 Hare, 114; *Cunningham v. Pell*, 5 Paige, 607; *Rumney v. Monce*, Finch R. 334, 336; 1 Danl. Ch. Pr. 251; *Charles. Ins. & T. Co. v. Sebring*, 5 Rich. Eq. R. 342.

The case is one between a corporator and the corporation, and the jurisdiction cannot be affirmed unless the court is prepared to answer the question whether a mere legal entity, an artificial person, invisible, intangible, can be a citizen of the United States in the sense in which that word is used in the constitution; and relying upon the case of *Marshall v. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company*, with a long list of antecessors, I am forced to conclude that it cannot be.

The court has assumed this jurisdiction, and I am therefore

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called to inquire whether a court of chancery can take cognizance of the bill? The act of incorporation of the bank charges the board of directors with the care of the corporate affairs, subject to an annual responsibility to the stockholders. The principle of a court of chancery is, to decline any interference with the discretion of such directors, or to regulate their conduct or management in respect to the duties committed to them.

The business of that court is to redress grievances illegally inflicted or threatened, not to supply the prudence, knowledge, or forecast requisite to successful corporate management. The facts of this case involve, in my opinion, merely a question of discretion in the performance of an official duty. In 1852, the taxes were withdrawn from the treasurer of Cuyahoga county, by an assignee of the bank, and were never passed into the State treasury. The supreme court of Ohio, subsequently to this, pronounced the taxes to be legally assessed upon these banks, and that there was no contract between the State and the banks, and there was no [ \* 367 ] exemption from the tax by anything apparent \*in the act of 1845. Some of these judgments were pending in this court upon writs of error then undecided, no judgment having been given contrary to that of the authorities, legislative, executive, and judicial, as well as by the people of Ohio. It was under these conditions that this stockholder, who purchased stock after the controversy had arisen in Ohio, some five days before the taxes were payable, addressed the directors of the Commercial Bank to take preventive measures—that is, I suppose, to file a bill for an injunction instantly—and, upon their suggestion of difficulties, proceeds to take charge of the corporate rights of the bank by this suit, in the circuit court of the United States. The directors were elected annually; they were, collectively, owners of one tenth of the stock of the bank, and no evidence is shown that any other stockholder supposed that “preventive measures,” under the circumstances, could be sustained. There is no charge of fraud, collusion, neglect of duty, or of indifference by the directors, save this omission to take some undefined “preventive measures,” which the plaintiff affected to suppose might be proper.

I understand the rule of chancery, in reference to such a case, to be that no suit can be maintained by an individual stockholder for a wrong done, or threatened, to such a corporation, unless it appears that the plaintiff has no means of procuring a suit to be instituted in the name of the corporation; and that the rule is universal, applicable, as well to the cases where the acts which afford the ground for complaint were either such as a majority

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might sanction, or whether it belonged to the category of those acts by which no stockholder could be bound except by his own consent. This principle has the highest sanction in the decisions of that court. (*Foss v. Harbottle*, 2 Hare, 461—affirmed 1 Phil. 790; 2 Phil. 740; 7 Hare, 130.) The principle is an obvious consequence from the relations between the officers and members of a chartered corporation, and the corporation itself. These are explained in *Smith v. Hurd*, 12 Met. 371. The court says: "There is no legal privity, relation, or immediate connection, between the holders of shares in a bank in their individual capacity, on the one side, and the directors of the bank on the other. The directors are not the bailers, the factors, agents, or trustees of such individual stockholders. The bank is a corporation and body politic having a separate existence, as a distinct person in law, in whom the whole stock and property of the bank are vested, and to whom all agents, debtors, officers, and servants, are responsible for all contracts, express or implied, made in reference to such capital; and for all torts and injuries, diminishing or impairing it." The corporation, therefore, must vindicate its own wrongs, and assert its own rights, in the modes pointed out by law.

\*I do not say that a court of chancery will never permit an individual stockholder to come before it to assert a right of the corporation in which he is a shareholder, where there is an obstacle of such a nature that the name of the corporation cannot be employed before legitimate tribunals in their regular modes of proceeding, but the burden is thrown upon the plaintiff to establish the existence of an urgent necessity for such a suit.

The consideration of analogous cases will strengthen this conclusion; cases where courts of chancery are more free to intervene, from the fiduciary relations between the parties and the extent of its general jurisdiction over them. Such are cases of danger to the interests of a creditor of an estate from the collusion of an executor with the debtor of the estate, or the insolvency of the executor; or where an executor wrongfully fails to make a settlement with a surviving partner, and a residuary legatee seeks one entire settlement of the estate against the executor and partner; or where a decedent in his life has fraudulently conveyed assets, and his executor is estopped to impute fraud, and there are creditors; or where the managers of a joint-stock company have been guilty of fraud, illegality, waste, and their stockholders desire relief. In all these cases the court of chancery will suffer a party remotely interested to institute the suit which his trustee, or other representative, should have brought, and will grant the relief on that suit



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which would have been appropriate to the case of him who should have commenced it. Sir John Romilly, in a late case belonging to one of these categories, says :

“ To support such a bill as this it is not sufficient to prove that it may be an unpleasant duty to the executors and trustees to take the necessary steps for protecting the property intrusted to them. It is not sufficient to show that it will be for their interests not to take such steps. It is necessary to show that they prefer their own interests to their duty, and that they intend to neglect the performance of the obligation incidental to the office imposed upon them, and which they assumed to perform; or, as said in *Travis v. Mylne*, that a substantial impediment to the prosecution by the executors of the rights of the parties interested in the estate against the surviving partner exists.” *Stainton v. Carron Co.* 23 L. & Eq. 315; *Travis v. Mylne*, 9 Hare, 141; *Hersey v. Veazie*, 11 Shep. 1; *Colquitt v. Howard*, 11 Geo. 556.

These cases afford no support to this suit. The Cleveland Bank has betrayed no purpose to abandon its corporate duty. The interests and obligations of the directors coincide to support its pretensions. There is no supineness in their past conduct, nor indifference to the existing peril. The evidence, at the most, convicts them only of a present disinclination to commence suits, [ \* 369 ] \* which were likely to be unproductive, at the request of a single shareholder. The answer shows that the taxes for 1852 had not been recovered by the State, but had been retaken by an assignee of the bank. Nor does the correspondence show that the directors had decided to abandon the contest. The case here does not at all fulfill the conditions on which the interposition of a shareholder is allowable. *Elmslie v. McAuley*, 3 Bro. C. C. 224, 1 Phil. 790; *Law v. Law*, 2 Coll. 41; *Walker v. Trott*, 4 Ed. Ch. R. 38.

But the evidence does not allow me to conclude that any impediment whatever existed to a suit in the name of the corporation, from any disposition of the directors to resist the claims of the State. Their protest appears at every successive stage of the action of the fiscal officers. This suit is evidently maintained with their consent; there has been no appearance either by the directors or the corporation, but they abide the case of the stockholder. The decree is for the benefit of the corporation. The question then is, can a corporation belonging to a State, and whose officers are citizens, upon some hope or assurance that the opinions of the courts of the United States are more favorable to their pretensions, by any combination, contrivance, or agreement with a non-resident share-

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holder, devolve upon him the right to seek for the redress of corporate grievances, which are the subjects of equitable cognizance in the courts of the United States, by a suit in his own name. In my opinion there should be but one answer to the question.

I come now to the merits of the case made by the bill.

In the suit of the Piqua Bank v. Knoop, 16 How. 369, I gave the opinion that the act of February, 1845, did not contain a contract obligatory between the State of Ohio and the banking corporations which might be originated by it, in reference to the rule of taxation to be applied to their capital or business. That the act imposed no limit upon the power of the general assembly of the State, but that the rate of taxation established in that act was alterable at their pleasure. To that opinion I now adhere.

But assuming a contract to be collected from the indeterminate expressions of the 60th section of the act, as interpreted by its general objects and the supposed policy of the State, the question is presented, what consequence did the reconstitution of the political system of the State by the people in 1851, and their direction to the legislature to adopt equality as the rule of assessment of taxes upon corporate property, accomplish to the claims of these corporations?

Certainly no greater question—none involving a more elemental or important principle—has ever been submitted to a judicial \*tribunal. It involves the operation and efficiency [ \* 370 ] of the fundamental principles on which the American constitutions have been supposed to rest.

The proposition of this confederacy of some fifty banking corporations, having one fortieth of the property of the State, is, that by the law of their organization for the whole term of their corporate being, there exists no power in the government nor people of Ohio to impair the concessions contained in the act of 1845, particularly that determining the amount of their contribution to the public revenue. This proposition does not depend for its truth upon the limitation of time imposed upon the corporate existence of the banks. It would not affect the proposition if the charters were for a century, or in perpetuity. Nor does the proposition derive strength from the fact that the statute applies only to banking corporations, or corporations confined to a single form of commercial dealing. The proposition would have had the same degree of accuracy if the act had been universal, applicable to all private corporations, whether for manufactures, trade, intercourse, mining, morals, or religion. It is said by a competent authority, that in the State of Massachusetts there are near twenty-five hundred

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trading corporations, and that more than seven tenths of the real and personal property of that State is held by corporations. The proportion between the property of corporations and individuals is greater there than in other States, but the property held by corporations in other States is large enough to awaken the most earnest attention. A concession of the kind contained in this act, by a careless or a corrupt legislature, for a term or in perpetuity, would impair in many States their resources to an alarming extent.

Writers upon the condition of the Turkish empire say, that three fourths of the landed property of the empire is held in mortmain, as vakuf by mosques or charitable institutions, for their own use, or in trust for their owners. This property ceases to contribute to the public revenues, except in a specific form of certain objectionable taxes on produce, and is inalienable. If held in trust, it is exempt from forced sales and confiscations, and, on the death of the owner without children, passes to the mosque or other charitable trustee. In that empire, the ecclesiastical and judicial is the dominant interest, for the Ulemas are both priests and lawyers, just as the corporate moneyed interest is dominant in Ohio, and in either country that interest claims exemption from the usual burdens and ordinary legislation of the State. The judgment of this court would establish the permanent existence of such an incubus upon the resources and growth of that country, if that interest should have taken their privileges in the form of a contract, and had such a constitution as ours. Yet the first step for the regeneration of Turkey, according to the wisest statesmanship, is to abolish the vakuf.

Bentham, treating upon constitutional provisions in favor of contracts, says: "If all contracts were to be observed, all misdeeds would be to be committed, for there is no misdeed the committal of which may not be made the subject of a contract; and to establish in favor of themselves, or of any other person or persons, an absolute despotism, a set of legislators would have no more to do than to enter into any engagement—say with a foreign despot, say with a member of their own community—for this purpose." And were this to happen, should it be that a State of this Union had become the victim of vicious legislation, its property alienated, its powers of taxation renounced in favor of chartered associations, and the resources of the body politic cut off, what remedy has the people against the misgovernment? Under the doctrines of this court none is to be found in the government, and none exists in the inherent powers of the people, if the wrong has taken the form of a contract. The most deliberate and solemn acts of the people would

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not serve to redress the injustice, and the overreaching speculator upon the facility or corruption of their legislature would be protected by the powers of this court in the profits of his bargain. Where would the people find a remedy? Let the case before us form an illustration. Congress cannot limit the term nor abolish the privileges of these corporations; they are corporations of Ohio, and beyond her limits they have no legal existence; they live in the contemplation of her laws and dwell in the place of their creation. (13 Pet. 512; 16 How. 314.) Nor can congress enlarge the subjects for State taxation, nor interfere in the support of the State government. They could not empower the State to collect taxes from these corporations. Were the resources of the State oppressed with the burden of a Turkish vakuf, congress could not afford relief.

The faculties of the judicial department are even more fatal to the State than the impotence of congress. The courts cannot look to the corruption, the blindness, nor mischievous effects of State legislation, to determine its binding operation. (*Fletcher v. Peck*, 6 Cr. 87.) The court, therefore, becomes the patron of such legislation, by furnishing motives of incalculable power to the corporations to stimulate it, and affording stability and security to the successful effort. Where, then, is the remedy for the people? They have none in their State government nor in themselves, and the federal government is enlisted by their adversary. It may be that an amendment of the constitution of the United States, by the proposal of two thirds of congress and the ratification of the legislatures of three fourths of the States, \*might enable the [\* 372] people of Ohio to assess taxes for the support of their government, upon terms of equality among her citizens.

The first observation to be made upon this is, that these extraordinary pretensions of corporations are not unfamiliar to an inquirer into their nature and history. The steady aim of the most thoroughly organized and powerful of the corporate establishments of Europe has ever been to place themselves under the protection of an external authority, superior to the government and people where they dwell—an authority sufficiently powerful to shield them from responsibility and to secure their privileges from question. I do not refer to the claim of kings to passive obedience under a divine title. Ecclesiastical corporations, acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope, afford a case parallel to that before us. I find their principles compendiously declared in an allocution of a minister of Rome to the court of Sardinia, in reference to taxes on church property there. I find that “religious corporations, forming a portion of the ecclesiastical family at large, are by their very nature, under

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the guardianship and authority of the church; and, consequently, no measure or laws can be adopted with respect to them, except by the spiritual power, or through its agency, especially in what touches their existence or their conduct in the institutions to which they respectively belong; nor can any other rule be recognized, even in matters that concern their property. It is, in truth, beyond dispute that the property possessed by ecclesiastical or religious foundations belongs to the general category of property of the church, and constitutes a true and proper portion of its patrimony. In consequence whereof, as the property of the church is inviolable, so are the possessions of such foundations." Nor was the doctrine of the inviolableness of contracts foreign to these controversies. The sagacious and far-sighted members of the ecclesiastical interests fortified themselves with concordats, and these concordats were affirmed to be "contracts," and, like these, "entail obligations;" and "if the bond of a bargain is to be respected in private life," so they declared "it is sacred and inviolable in the life of states." A slight change of expression will demonstrate that the principle of corporate policy, the dictate of corporate ambition, which has predominated in the contests in Europe, leading to desolating wars, is the same which this court is required to sanction in favor of corporations in the United States. The allocution of the Ohio banks to this court may be thus stated: "That the charters of incorporation granted by the State governments are in their essence and nature 'contracts,' which 'entail obligations;' that, consequently, they are finally under the guardianship and protection of the judiciary establishment of the United States; that no acts of the State

[ \* 373 ] \*legislature which conferred them, in whatever touches their existence, methods of proceeding, or corporate privilege, are binding on them; that, as the State legislatures are agents of the people, whatever they have done in these respects is obligatory upon them, and irrevocable by them, in any form of their action, or in the exercise of any of their sovereign authority; and as the judiciary establishment of the Union is charged with the duty of holding the States and people to their limited orbits, and to afford redress for violated contracts, and to prevent serious resulting damage; and as these corporations cannot sue in the courts of the United States, it is the duty of the court to suffer the corporate wrongs to be redressed in the suit and at the solicitation of any of their stockholders who can appear there—for the state of opinion in the State courts will not allow the hope of redress from them."

The allowance of this plea interposes this court between these corporations and the government and people of Ohio, to which

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they owe their existence, and by whose laws they derive all their faculties. It will establish on the soil of every State a caste made up of combinations of men for the most part under the most favorable conditions in society, who will habitually look beyond the institutions and the authorities of the State to the central government for the strength and support necessary to maintain them in the enjoyment of their special privileges and exemptions. The consequence will be a new element of alienation and discord between the different classes of society, and the introduction of a fresh cause of disturbance in our distracted political and social system. In the end, the doctrine of this decision may lead to a violent overturn of the whole system of corporate combinations.

Having thus examined the proportions of the doctrine contained in the judgment of the court, I oppose to it a deliberate and earnest dissent.

And, first, as to the claim made for the court to be the final arbiter of these questions of political power, I can imagine no pretension more likely to be fatal to the constitution of the court itself. If this court is to have an office so transcendent as to decide finally the powers of the people over persons and things within the State, a much closer connection and a much more direct responsibility of its members to the people is a necessary condition for the safety of the popular rights. Justice Woodbury, in *Luther v. Borden*, 7 How. 52, has exposed this danger with great discrimination and force. He said: "Another evil, alarming and little foreseen, involved in regarding these as questions for the final arbitrament of judges, would be, that in such an event all political privileges and rights would in a dispute \*among the people [ \* 374 ] depend on our decision finally. We would possess the power to decide against them, as well as for them; and, under a prejudiced or arbitrary judiciary, the public liberties or popular privileges might thus be much perverted, if not entirely prostrated. And if the people, in the distribution of powers under the constitution, should ever think of making judges supreme arbiters in political controversies, when not selected by nor amenable to them, nor at liberty to follow the various considerations that belong to political questions in their judgments, they will dethrone themselves, and lose one of their invaluable birthrights—building up in this way slowly, but surely, a new sovereign power in this republic in most respects irresponsible, unchangeable for life, and one, in theory at least, more dangerous than the worst elective monarchy in the worst of times."

The inquiry recurs, have the people of Ohio deposited with this



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tribunal the authority to overrule their own judgment upon the extent of their own powers over institutions created by their own government and commorant within the State? The fundamental principle of American constitutions, it seems to me, is, that to the people of the several States belongs the resolution of all questions, whether of regulation, compact, or punitive justice, arising out of the action of their municipal government upon their citizens, or depending upon their constitutions and laws, and are judges of the validity of all acts done by their municipal authorities in the exercise of their sovereign rights, in either case without responsibility or control from any department of the federal government. This I understand to be the import of the municipal sovereignty of the people within the State.

In 1802 the inhabitants of Ohio were released from their pupilage to the federal authority, placed in full possession of their rights to self-government, and were invited to adapt their institutions to the federal system, of which the State, when formed, was authorized to become a member.

The people of Ohio, by their State constitution, reserved to themselves "complete power" to "alter, reform, and abolish their government;" "to petition for redress of grievances;" and to "recur, as often as might be necessary, to the first principles of government." It was by a constitution adopted according to established forms, and expressive of the sovereign will of the body politic, that the rule of taxation complained of in this suit was prescribed.

The inquiry arises, to what did the authority of the people extend? It was their right to ameliorate every vicious institution, and to do whatever an enlightened statesmanship might [ \* 375 ] \* prescribe for the advancement of their own happiness; and for this end, persons and things in the State were submitted to their authority. A material distinction has always been acknowledged to exist as to the degrees of the authority that a people could legitimately exert over persons and corporations. Individuals are not the creatures of the State, but constitute it. They come into society with rights, which cannot be invaded without injustice. But corporations derive their existence from the society, are the offspring of transitory conditions of the State; and with faculties for good in such conditions, combine durable dispositions for evil. They display a love of power, a preference for corporate interests to moral or political principles or public duties, and an antagonism to individual freedom, which have marked them as objects of jealousy in every epoch of their history. Therefore, the power has been exercised, in all civilized states, to limit

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their privileges, or to suppress their existence, under the exigencies either of public policy or political necessity.

Sir James McIntosh says: "Property is indeed, in some sense, created by act of the public will, but it is by one of those fundamental acts which constitute society. Theory proves it to be essential to the social state. Experience proves that it has, in some degree, existed in every age and nation of the world. But those public acts, which form and endow corporations, are subsequent and subordinate. They are only ordinary expedients of legislation. The property of individuals is established on a general principle, which seems coeval with civil society itself. But bodies are instruments fabricated by the legislature for a specific purpose, which ought to be preserved while they are beneficial, amended when they are impaired, and rejected when they become useless or injurious." Vind. Gal. 48, note.

Who, in the United States, is to determine when the public interests demand the suppression of bodies whose existence or modes of action are contrary to the well being of the state?

If the powers of the people of a State are inadequate to this object, then their grave and solemn declarations of their rights and their authority over their governments, and of the ends for which their governments and the institutions of their governments, were framed, and the responsibility of rulers and magistrates to themselves, are nothing but "great swelling words of vanity."

But not only is the jurisdiction of Ohio "complete" over the public institutions of her government, but the subject-matter upon which their will was expressed in their constitution was independently of their control over the corporations, one over which their jurisdiction was plenary. They declared in what \*manner property held within the State by these artificial [ \* 376 ] bodies should contribute to the public support, in the form of regular and apportioned taxation. When the constitution of the United States was before the people of the States for their ratification, they were told, that, with the exception of duties on exports and imports, the States retained "an independent and uncontrollable authority" to "raise their own revenue in the most absolute and unqualified sense;" and that any attempt, on the part of the federal government, to abridge them in the exercise of it, would be "a violent assumption of power unwarranted by any clause of the constitution." (Fed. 163, by Hamilton.) And the opinions of this court are filled with disclaimers on the same subject. 4 Wheat. 429.

The true principle, therefore, would seem to be, that if there was

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any conflict in the tax laws of the State, and a supposed contract of its legislative or executive agents with one of its citizens, it would be for the State to harmonize the two upon principles of general equity; but in no condition of facts for the judiciary department to interfere with State affairs by writs of replevin or injunction. The acknowledgment of such a power would be to establish the alarming doctrine that the empire of Ohio, and the remaining States of the Union, over their revenues, is not to be found in their people, but in the numerical majority of the judges of this court.

In the opinion I gave in the case of the Piqua Bank, I exhibited evidence that the care of the public domain, whether consisting of crown lands or of taxes on property, belonged to the sovereign power of the State, and that improvident alienations by the crown were, from time to time, set aside by the parliament of Great Britain under the dictates of a public policy. Twelve acts of parliament are cited by Sir William Davenant of this character, and having this object. Davenant, Grants and Res. 244.

A similar condition existed in France. The kings were bound, by their coronation oath, "to maintain and preserve the public domain with all their power," and it was an inviolable maxim, that it could not be alienated, except in specified cases determined in the fundamental laws of the monarchy. This legal result was declared by the national assembly in 1790, to the effect that the public domain, with all its accretions, belonged to the nation; that this property is the most perfect that can be imagined, since there exists no superior power that can restrain or modify it; that the power to alienate—the essential attribute of property—exists in the nation; that every appropriation of public domain is essentially revocable, if made without the consent of the [ \* 377 ] nation; that it preserves over the property \*alienated the same right and authority as if it had remained under its control; and that this principle was one which no lapse of time nor legal formality could evade. All grants, therefore, of the public rights, and especially those partaking of the nature of taxes, or subsidies, such as fines, confiscations, and stamps, were revoked, because the subject was not alienable. 8 Merlin Rep. tit. Dom. Pub.; 1 Proud., Dom. Pub. 62.

If the power to review the illegal or improvident acts of a monarch, by which "the domain and patrimony of the crown" (one of the principal sinews of the state, as they are termed in the ordinances) was dilapidated or impoverished, in the nearly absolute monarchies of Europe, was reserved to the nation, it would seem to

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follow that in the American States, where so little has been conceded to the government, and whose "complete power" to amend or abrogate is so distinctly reserved that no inference nor implication can arise, that the same has been relinquished or abdicated. My conclusion is, that the constitution of Ohio, whether it is to be regarded as the expression of the sovereign will of the people, that the extraordinary exemptions granted to these corporations, by which they contribute unequally to the public support, is contrary to the genius of their institutions; or whether they are inconsistent with a just apportionment of the public burdens; or whether, as a declaration of the exigency of the State, requiring an additional contribution from them to its revenue; or a judgment of condemnation of the former government for an abuse of the powers it enjoyed; that it is above and beyond the supervision or control of the judiciary department of this government.

Nor does the opinion, that this department can exert such an empire over the people of Ohio, derive support, in my opinion, from the clause in the constitution on the subject of the obligation of contracts, nor the decisions of this court upon that clause of the constitution.

That the people of the States should have released their powers over the artificial bodies which originate under the legislation of their representatives, or over the improvident charges or concessions imposed by them upon its revenues, or over the acts of their own functionaries, is not to be assumed. Such a surrender was not essential to any policy of the Union, nor required by any confederate obligation. Such an abandonment could have served no other interest than that of the corporations, or individuals who might profit by the legislative acts themselves. Combinations of classes in society, united by the bond of a corporate spirit, for the accumulation of power, influence, or wealth, by the control of intercourse or trade, or the spiritual or moral concerns of society, unquestionably desire limitations upon the sovereignty

\* of the people, and the existence of an authority upon [\* 378] which they can repose in security and confidence. But the framers of the constitution were imbued with no desire to call into existence such combinations, nor dread of the sovereignty of the people. They denied to congress the power to create, (3 Mad. Deb. 1576,) and the most salutary jealousy was expressed in reference to them. The people of the States, during the existence of the confederation, suffered from the violation of private property by their governments. In reconstituting their political system, they abstain from delegating to the United States the powers to emit

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bills of credit; to make anything but gold and silver a tender in the payment of debts; to pass any bill of attainder or *ex post facto* law, or law to impair the obligation of contracts, except so far as necessary to a uniform law of bankruptcy; while they protected property from unreasonable searches and seizures, and the title from detriment, except in the due course of legal proceeding.

The State governments were prohibited from any corresponding legislation, either by their federal or State constitutions.

The power to interfere with private contracts is one of the most delicate and difficult, in its exercise, of any belonging to the social system, and one which there is constant temptation to abuse. That its exercise is sometimes necessary is proved by the history of every civilized state. Its judicious exercise constitutes the titles of Solon and Sully to fame, and has been vindicated by the most enlightened statesmen. But the people reserved for themselves to determine the exigencies which should call it into existence. The prohibition is a limitation upon the ordinary government, and not upon the popular sovereignty. In *Fletcher v. Peck*, 6 Cr. 87, the chief justice doubted whether the repeal of a grant, issued under a legislative act by the executive of a State, was within the competence of the legislative authority; and notices the distinction between acts of legislation and sovereignty, and treats the clause of the constitution under consideration as an inhibition on legislation. In *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, 4 Wheat. 518, 553, Mr. Webster presents the distinction with prominence in his argument. He says: "It is not too much to assert that the legislature of New Hampshire would not have been competent to pass the acts in question, and make them binding on the plaintiffs, without their assent, even if there had been in the constitution of the United States, or of New Hampshire, no special restriction on their power, because these acts are not the exercise of a power properly legislative. \* \* \* The British parliament could not have annulled or revoked this grant as an ordinary act of legislation. If it had done it at all, it could only have been in virtue of that sovereign power \* called omnipotent, which does not belong to any legislature of the United States. The legislature of New Hampshire has the same power over the charter which belonged to the king who granted it, and no more. By the law of England, the power to grant corporations is a part of the royal prerogative. By the revolution, this power may be considered as having devolved on the legislature of the State, and it has been accordingly exercised by the legislature. But the king cannot

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abolish a corporation, or new model it, or alter its powers, without its assent." \* \* \* \* \*

Chief Justice Marshall, in describing the jurisdiction of the court over such contracts, says, it belongs to it "the duty of protecting from legislative violation those contracts which the constitution of the country has placed beyond legislative control." And, in defining the object and extent of the prohibition, he says: "Before the formation of the constitution, a course of legislation had prevailed in many, if not in all the States, which weakened the confidence of man in man, and embarrassed all transactions between individuals by dispensing with a faithful performance of engagements. To correct this mischief by restraining the power which produced it, the State legislatures were forbidden to pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts; that is, of contracts respecting property under which some individual could claim a right to something beneficial to himself." These selections from opinions delivered in this court which have carried the prerogative jurisdiction of the court to its farthest limit, and portions of which are not easily reconciled with a long series of cases subsequently decided, (*Satterlee v. Matthewson*, 2 Pet. 380; *Charles River Bridge*, 11 Pet. 420; *West River Bridge v. Dix*, 6 How. 507; 8 How. 569; 10 How. 511,) show with clearness that this court has not, till now, impugned the sovereignty of the people of a State over these artificial bodies called into existence by their own legislatures.

I have thus given the reasons for the opinion that the constitution of Ohio and the acts of her government, done by its special authority and direction, are valid dispositions. It is no part of my jurisdiction to inquire whether these public acts of the people and the State were just or equitable. Those questions belong entirely to themselves.

It may be that the people may abuse the powers with which they are invested, and, even in correcting the abuses of their government, may not in every case act with wisdom and circumspection.

But, for my part, when I consider the justice, moderation, the restraints upon arbitrary power, the stability of social order, the security of personal rights, and general harmony which existed in the country before the sovereignty of governments was \* asserted, and when the sovereignty of the people was [ \* 380 ] a living and operative principle, and governments were administered subject to the limitations, and with reference to the specific ends for which they were organized, and their members recognized their responsibility and dependence, I feel no anxiety nor apprehension in leaving to the people of Ohio a "complete



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power'' over their government, and all the institutions and establishments it has called into existence. My conclusion is, that the decree of the circuit court of Ohio is erroneous, and that the judgment of this court should be to reverse that decree and to dismiss the bill of the plaintiff.

Mr. Justice DANIEL:

I concur entirely in the preceding opinion of my brother Campbell.

Mr. Justice CATRON:

I also dissent, and concur with the conclusions of the opinion just read.

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THE MECHANICS' AND TRADERS' BANK, Plaintiff in Error, v. DEBOLT,  
Treasurer of Hamilton County.

18 H. 380.

SAME v. CHARLES THOMAS, Treasurer of Hamilton County.

18 H. 384.

THESE cases were brought here by writs of error to the supreme court of Ohio.

They were brought in the court of common pleas of Hamilton county, upon an agreed statement of facts, which presented the precise question concerning the validity of the tax assessed against the bank, in reference to its effect as impairing the obligation of a contract, which was presented in the preceding case of *Dodge v. Woolsey*, and the case of *The State Bank of Ohio v. Knoop*, reported in 16 How. 369; 21 Curtis, 190.

And the court, upon the authority of those cases, without further opinion, reversed the judgment of the supreme court of Ohio, and held the statute void, so far as it imposed increased taxes on the bank.

*Mr. Stanberry and Mr. Perry*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Pugh*, for defendant.

[ \* 383 ] \* Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court.

Upon our examination of the agreed statement in this case, we find that it is ruled by the cases of *The Piqua Branch of the State Bank of Ohio v. Knoop*, 16 How. 369, and that of *Dodge*

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*v. Woolsey*, decided at this term. We therefore reverse the decree of the supreme court, and direct a mandate to issue accordingly.

Mr. Justice CATRON, Mr. Justice DANIEL, and Mr. Justice CAMPBELL, dissented.

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JOSEPH WILKINS and others, Plaintiffs in Error, *v.* DAVID ALLEN and others.

18 H. 385.

CONSTRUCTION OF A WILL—NECESSITY OF CLEAR LANGUAGE TO DISINHERIT HEIRS.

1. The law of Pennsylvania substituting all the children for the oldest son adopts, with the common law, so modified, its rule that heirs can only be disinherited by express words of a will or by necessary implication.
2. A specific devise to the wife of a life estate in certain lots, and a charge upon the real and personal estate of an amount in her favor, followed by sundry specific legacies, and devise of all the surplus to the benefit of a church, does not, either by express words or necessary implication, disinherit the heirs of the real estate.
3. Nor can extrinsic evidence of memoranda, made by the testator, or of the value of the personal estate, showing its insufficiency to meet the specific legacies or to leave any surplus, be received to aid in the construction of the will. The English authorities considered.

THIS was a writ of error to the circuit court for the western district of Pennsylvania.

The action was ejectment, brought by the defendants in error, subjects of the queen of Great Britain, against the executors of the will of Michael Allen. They were the heirs of Allen; and the only question in the case was whether the will of the testator had, by devising the real estate in controversy, defeated the title of plaintiffs as his heirs at law.

*Mr. Williams*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Stanton* and *Mr. Loomis*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court. [\* 390]

Michael Allen, of the city of Pittsburg, made his will in 1849, by which he bequeathed to his wife, for life, his dwelling-house in said city, with two lots of ground occupied by him and her as a garden. He also gave her the household furniture and library. "And still furthermore," he declares, "that, first and foremost, there shall be secured to my dear wife, on my real and personal estate, an annuity of twelve hundred dollars a year, to be punctually paid semi-annually during her lifetime, and that

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my executors pay all the taxes on the premises occupied by my dear wife during her lifetime.”

The testator then bequeaths: 1st. To the five children of Dr. Robert Wray, five hundred dollars each. 2d. To the managers of the orphan asylums of the cities of Pittsburg and Alleghany, two thousand dollars each. 3d To the pastor and sessions of the First Presbyterian Church, two thousand dollars. 4th. To the general assembly of the Presbyterian church, ten thousand dollars. 5th. To the trustees of the board of sessions of said general assembly, four thousand dollars. 6th. To the Foreign Evangelical Society, located in New York, three thousand dollars. 7th, 8th, and 9th, he gave for the use of the Presbyterian church, eleven thousand dollars. 10th. To the American Bible Society, six thousand dollars. 11th. To the American Tract Society, four thousand dollars. 12th. For the use of the Sunday School Union, situate in Philadelphia, four thousand dollars.

He next declares: “As to my debts, they will amount to very little; but, and after paying all claims and bequests, there will remain a considerable surplus, which I give and bequeath in trust to my executors, be the same more or less, to be applied to the religious and benevolent purposes of the several institutions of the general assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, as before mentioned;” and then constitutes and appoints his executors (who are the plaintiffs in error) to carry out the provisions of the will.

The defendants in error are the heirs at law of Michael Allen. They sued his executors in ejectment to recover a portion of the lands situate in the city of Pittsburg, of which he died seized, insisting that the lands did not pass by the will.

The residuary clause was supposed to be of doubtful meaning and obscure. To remove the alleged obscurity, the defendants below offered to prove on the trial, “from memoranda made by the testator at the time of the execution of said last [ \* 391 ] \* will and testament, and upon the basis of which the same was prepared by him, and also by declarations made by him at and about the same time, what was his real meaning in the employment of the word ‘surplus’ in the residuary clause of said will, and that the same was intended to comprehend his whole remaining estate, as well real as personal.”

“And further, to show by other evidence, besides the said memoranda, the actual amount and condition of the personal estate at the time of the execution of the said last will and testament, as well as at the period of the testator’s death, and that the same was

entirely insufficient, at either of the said periods, to pay the specific and pecuniary legacies provided therein; and this, for the purpose of explaining the meaning of the testator in the said residuary clause, and the employment of the said word 'surplus' therein, by showing that, if the same did not embrace the real estate, the said residuary clause would be entirely inoperative, for the reason that there was, in point of fact, under such construction, at neither of said periods, any surplus whatever, as supposed and declared by the testator himself."

On motion of the plaintiffs, the court rejected the evidence, and instructed the jury that no title vested in the executors by the residuary clause.

On this state of facts, the first question presented for our consideration is, whether the terms of the will are sufficient in themselves, when interpreted by their context, to carry the real estate to the executors?

As, in this instance, the testator's language must be construed with reference to the laws and policy of the country of his domicile, it is our duty to ascertain what the laws and policy of Pennsylvania are, so far as they may have a controlling influence in the construction of this will.

In the first place, Pennsylvania has only so far altered the English common law as to substitute all the children for the sole heir, carrying out this rule of descent through the collateral branches. This is the will the law makes in case of intestacy, and is the policy of the State. Under the law, the heirs must take, unless they are "disinherited by express words, or necessary implication." "Conjecture, nor uncertainty, shall never disinherit him." Such was the ground assumed by counsel in the case of *Clayton v. Clayton*, 3 Binney, 481, and which assumption was sustained by the court; *ib.* 486. Chief Justice Tilghman says: "The rule of law gives the estate to the heir, unless the will takes it from him; and, in order to take it from him, it must give it to some other person. Thus we are brought back to the question, are there any words in the will sufficient to convey more than an estate for life to the devisees? I can find none."

\*In the case referred to, the testator devised a home- [\* 392] stead to his niece, Sarah Evans, and her children, without adding the word heirs. That he intended to give an estate in fee was hardly open to controversy; but the words of the will did not carry the fee, and the court refused to follow a doubtful intention. It there came fairly up to the rule laid down in the English case of *Mudge v. Blight et ux.* Cowp. 355, that, "where there are no

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words of limitation, the court must determine in the case of a devise affecting real estate, that the devisee has only an estate for life, because the principle is fully settled and established, and no conjecture of a private imagination can shake a rule of law. If the intention of the testator is doubtful, the rule of law must take place: and so if the court cannot find words in the will sufficient to carry a fee. Though they should themselves be satisfied beyond the possibility of a doubt, as to what the intention of the party was, they must adhere to the rule of law."

This decision was made in 1811, and the principles then laid down have since been adhered to with uncommon care and strictness.

In speaking of expressions in a will necessary to disinherit the heir, Chief Justice Gibson, in delivering the opinion of the court in the case of *Bradford v. Bradford*, 6 Wharton, 244, says: "The intention must be manifest, and rest on something more certain than conjecture. The court must proceed on known principles and established rules, not on loose conjectural interpretations, nor considering what a man may be imagined to do in the testator's circumstances. The principle is applicable in all its force in a case like the present, in which the question goes to the birthright of those who, standing in place of the common-law heir, are not to be disinherited except by express devise, or, as is said in 1 Powell on Devises, 199, by implication so inevitable that an intention to the contrary cannot be supposed."

It is there admitted that when the testator provided that "all his worldly goods of all sorts and kinds" should be vested in trust and held as one fund, for a hundred years, and his children and their descendants should receive the rents and profits, that he most probably intended to include his lands. This, however, (the court declares,) is no more than a confident conjecture, and that it must come at last to an analysis of the testator's language to ascertain the legal meaning of the will.

Now, testing the will before us by these rules, and where can any provision be found in it showing a plain intention to disinherit the heirs? The lands are never named except where the wife is given a life estate in the homestead, and two lots, and, secondly, where her annuity of twelve hundred dollars is imposed on the goods and lands as a charge.

[ \* 393 ] \* But as the residuary clause is mainly relied on, as carrying the real estate to the executors, it is proper that some further notice should be taken of its import. The testator declared that his debts amounted to very little, and that, after

paying all claims and bequests, there would remain a considerable surplus, and this he bequeathed to his executors, to be applied to religious and benevolent purposes. He did not indicate any new fund, nor a surplus arising from the sale of lands, in the concluding clause of the will more than in any previous clause, where he provided for the support of the Presbyterian church.

The terms of the will, *proprio vigore*, being insufficient to disinherit the heirs, the next question is, whether the interpretation thereof may not be aided by extrinsic circumstances, namely, memoranda, declaration, and the actual amount and condition of the estate, as offered to be shown by the defendants below.

That the court may put itself in the place of the testator, by looking into the state of his property, and the circumstances by which he was surrounded when he made the will, is not only true as a general proposition, but without such information it must often happen that the will could not be sensibly construed. Wigram (10, 60) lays down the rule with much distinctness. Such evidence, however, is only admissible to explain ambiguities arising out of extrinsic circumstances, as to persons provided for, objects of disposition, and the like. For instance, if the testator gave to his grandson, J. S., a plantation, and he had two grandsons of that name; or he devised his son J. his plantation on a certain river, and he had two plantations there—in each case proof might be heard to show the person or thing intended. But evidence cannot be heard to show a different intention in the testator from that which the will discloses.

Such is the established doctrine of this court, as was held in the case of *Weatherhead v. Barksdale*, 11 How. 357.

The only English case we will refer to is that of *Miller v. Traverse*, 8 Bingh. 248. There the testator devised and vested in trust “all his freehold and real estates whatsoever in the county of Limerick, and the city of Limerick.” At the time of making the will, he had no real estate in the county of Limerick, but had a small estate in the city of Limerick, and considerable real estate in the county of Clare; and the question was, whether the devisees could be admitted to have an issue and trial at law on the ground that they offered to prove that, by the original draft of the will, the estates in Clare were included, and the county left out by oversight or mistake; and also that the testator so expressed himself.

The lord chancellor was assisted by the chief justice of the common pleas and the chief baron, and they all concurred in \*holding that the evidence offered could not be heard to [\*394] change the import of the will, and refused the issue.



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And so it is manifest here, that if the evidence were to show all that is assumed for it, yet it could not be heard to affect this will.

It is ordered that the judgment of the circuit court be affirmed.

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MARY ANN CONNOR, *alias* VAN NESS, Plaintiff in Error, v. SAMUEL A. PEUGH'S LESSEE.

18 H. 394.

PRACTICE IN EJECTMENT SUITS.

1. A service of the declaration in ejectment on the tenant in possession, ten days before the term of the circuit court for the District of Columbia, authorizes a judgment by default, where the tenant fails to appear.
2. On a motion at a subsequent term by the tenant, to set aside the judgment and permit a defense, the action of the court was discretionary, and is not the subject of review in this court.
3. Nor can the tenant who had not made an appearance, and was not a party to the action below, prosecute a writ of error to the judgment against the casual ejector.

THE case is brought here by writ of error to the circuit court for the District of Columbia, and is stated sufficiently in the opinion. It came up to be heard on a motion to dismiss the writ.

*Mr. Bradley* and *Mr. Lawrence*, for the motion.

*Mr. Brent*, opposed.

[ \* 395 ] \* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

Defendant in error moves to dismiss the writ of error in this case. It is an action of ejectment brought in the circuit court of this District in the usual form, by serving a declaration on the tenant in possession with notice. The declaration and notice were served by the marshal, more than ten days before March term, 1854. The tenant did not appear and have herself made defendant in place of the casual ejector, according to the exigency of the notice; and at October term a judgment was entered against the casual ejector, in the usual and proper form. On the 5th of June, 1855, the tenant in possession came into court for the first time, and moved to set aside the judgment and execution issued thereon, and to be allowed to defend the suit, for reasons set forth in her affidavit. The court refused to grant this motion, "whereupon the said Mary Ann Connor prayed an appeal," &c.

The tenant in possession having neglected to appear and have herself made defendant, and confess lease, entry, and ouster, the judgment was properly entered against the casual ejector. No one

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but a party to the suit can bring a writ of error. The tenant having neglected to have herself made such, cannot have a writ of error to the judgment against the casual ejector.

The motion afterwards made to have the judgment set aside, and for leave to intervene, was an application to the sound discretion of the court. To the action of the court on such a motion no appeal lies, nor is it the subject of a bill of exceptions or writ of error.

Writ of error dismissed.

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DANIEL SOUTH and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. THE STATE OF MARYLAND, Use of JONATHAN W. POTTLE.

18 H. 396.

SUIT ON SHERIFF'S BOND—LIABILITY OF SHERIFF AS CONSERVATOR OF THE PUBLIC PEACE.

1. The powers and duties of a sheriff are ministerial and judicial, or *quasi-judicial*. Of the latter character are his functions as conservator of the peace.
2. For a failure to perform these latter duties, he is not liable in a civil action by an individual, without allegation of a special right in the plaintiff, in which he is injured materially. The nature of these duties compared with his ministerial duties in serving process of courts, &c.
3. The sureties on his official bond are only liable in regard to this latter class of duties.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Maryland.

The case is sufficiently stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Nelson*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Dobbin* and *Mr. Johnson*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 401 ]

In this case a verdict was rendered for the plaintiff in the court below, and the defendant moved, in arrest of judgment, "that the matters set out in the declaration of the plaintiff are not sufficient, in law, to support the action." If it be found that the court erred in overruling this motion and in entering judgment on the verdict, a consideration of the other points raised on the trial will be unnecessary.

The action is brought on the official bond of South, as sheriff of Washington county. The declaration sets forth the condition of the bond at length. The breach alleged is, in substance, "that while Pottle was engaged about his lawful business, certain evil disposed persons came about him, hindered and prevented him,

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threatened his life, with force of arms demanded of him a large sum of money, and imprisoned and detained him for the space of four days, and until he paid them the sum of \$2,500 for his enlargement."

That South, the sheriff, being present, the plaintiff, Pottle, applied to him for protection, and requested him to keep the peace of the State of Maryland, he, the said sheriff, having power and authority so to do. That the sheriff neglected and refused to protect and defend the plaintiff, and to keep the peace, wherefore it is charged "the sheriff did not well and truly execute and perform the duties required of him by the laws of said State;" and thereby the said writing obligatory became forfeited, and action accrued to the plaintiff.

This declaration does not charge the sheriff with a breach of his duty in the execution of any writ or process in which Pottle, the real plaintiff in this case, was personally interested, but a neglect or refusal to preserve the public peace, in consequence of which the plaintiff suffered great wrong and injury from the unlawful violence of a mob. It assumes as a postulate, that every breach or neglect of a public duty subjects the officer to a civil suit by any individual who, in consequence thereof, has suffered loss or injury; and consequently, that the sheriff and his sureties are liable to this suit on his bond, because he has not "executed and performed all the duties required of and imposed on him by the laws of the State."

The powers and duties of the sheriff are usually arranged under four distinct classes:

1. In his judicial capacity he formerly held the sheriff's tourn, or county courts, and performed other functions which need not be enumerated.

[ \* 402 ] \* 2. As king's bailiff, he seized to the king's use all escheats, forfeitures, waifs, wrecks, estrays, &c.

3. As conservator of the peace in his county or bailiwick, he is the representative of the king, or sovereign power of the State for that purpose. He has the care of the county, and, though forbidden by *magna charta* to act as a justice of the peace in trial of criminal cases, he exercises all the authority of that office where the public peace was concerned. He may upon view, without writ or process, commit to prison all persons who break the peace or attempt to break it; he may award process of the peace, and bind any one in recognizance to keep it. He is bound, *ex officio*, to pursue and take all traitors, murderers, felons, and other misdoers, and commit them to jail for safe custody. For these purposes he may command the *posse comitatus* or power of the country; and

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this summons every one over the age of fifteen years is bound to obey, under pain of fine and imprisonment.

4. In his ministerial capacity he is bound to execute all processes issuing from the courts of justice. He is keeper of the county jail, and answerable for the safe-keeping of prisoners. He summons and returns juries, arrests, imprisons, and executes the sentence of the court, &c., &c. 1 Black. Com. 343; 2 Hawk, P. C. C. 8, § 4, &c., &c.

Originally the office of sheriff could be held by none but men of large estate, who were able to support the retinue of followers which the dignity of his office required, and to answer in damages to those who were injured by his neglect of duty in the performance of his ministerial functions. In more modern times, a bond with sureties supplies the place of personal wealth. The object of these bonds is security, not the imposition of liabilities upon the sheriff, to which he was not subject at common law. The specific enumeration of duties in the bond in this case includes none but those that are classed as ministerial. The general expression, in conclusion, should be construed to include only such other duties of the same kind as were not specially enumerated. To entitle a citizen to sue on this bond to his own use, he must show such a default as would entitle him to recover against the sheriff in an action on the case. When the sheriff is punishable by indictment as for a misdemeanor, in cases of a breach of some public duty, his sureties are not bound to suffer in his place, or to indemnify individuals for the consequences of such a criminal neglect.

It is an undisputed principle of the common law, that for a breach of a public duty, an officer is punishable by indictment; but where he acts ministerially, and is bound to render certain services to individuals, for a compensation in fees or salary, he \* is liable for acts of misfeasance or non-feasance to the [ \* 403 ] party who is injured by them.

The powers and duties of conservator of the peace exercised by the sheriff are not strictly judicial; but he may be said to act as the chief magistrate of his county, wielding the executive power for the preservation of the public peace. It is a public duty, for neglect of which he is amenable to the public, and punishable by indictment only.

The history of the law for centuries proves this to be the case. Actions against the sheriff, for a breach of his ministerial duties in the execution of process are to be found in almost every book of reports. But no instance can be found where a civil action has been sustained against him for his default or misbehavior as con-

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servator of the peace, by those who have suffered injury to their property or persons through the violence of mobs, riots, or insurrections.

In the case of *Entick v. Carrington*, State Trials, vol. 19, page 1062, Lord Camden remarks: "No man ever heard of an action against a conservator of the peace, as such."

The case of *Ashby v. White*, 2 Lord Raym. 938, has been often quoted to show that a sheriff may be liable to a civil action where he has acted in a judicial, rather than a ministerial capacity. This was an action brought by a citizen entitled to vote for member of parliament, against the sheriff for refusing his vote at an election. Gould, justice, thought the action would not lie, because the sheriff acted as a judge. Powis, because, though not strictly a judge, he acted *quasi-judicially*. But Holt, C. J., decided that the action would lie: 1. "Because the plaintiff had a right or privilege. 2. That, by the act of the officer, he was hindered from the enjoyment of it. 3. By the finding of the jury the act was done maliciously." The later cases all concur in the doctrine, that where the officer is held liable to a civil action for acts not simply ministerial, the plaintiff must allege and prove each of these propositions. See *Cullen v. Morris*, 2 Starkie, N. P. C.; *Harman v. Tappenden*, 1 East, 555, &c., &c.

The declaration in the case before us is clearly not within the principles of these decisions. It alleges no special individual right, privilege, or franchise in the plaintiff, from the enjoyment of which he has been restrained or hindered by the malicious act of the sheriff; nor does it charge him with any misfeasance or non-feasance in his ministerial capacity, in the execution of any process in which the plaintiff was concerned. Consequently, we are of opinion that the declaration sets forth no sufficient cause of action.

The judgment of the circuit court is therefore reversed.

18h 404  
L-ed 451  
38f 452

THE LAFAYETTE INSURANCE COMPANY, Plaintiff in Error, v. MAYNARD  
FRENCH and others.

18 H. 404.

CITIZENSHIP OF A CORPORATION—MISTAKE IN THE NAME OF CORPORATION—LIABILITY TO SUIT IN ANOTHER STATE.

1. In a suit in the circuit courts, it is not a sufficient averment of citizenship to describe the defendant as "The Lafayette Insurance Company, a citizen of the State of Indiana."
2. This court does not hold that either a voluntary association of persons, or an association into a body politic, created by law, is a citizen of a State, within the meaning

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of the constitution; but a statement that the defendants are a corporation created under the laws of the State of Indiana, having its principal place of business in that State, is sufficient. They bring the case within *Marshall v. The Railroad Co.*, 16 How. 314; 21 Curtis, 153.

3. Where such a corporation is permitted by the statute of another State to do business therein, the latter State has a right to impose, as a condition of this privilege, that it shall be suable by service of process on its agent within the State.
4. A judgment obtained by such service is, under the constitution and acts of congress, entitled to the same faith and credit in any other State as it has by law and usage in the State where it was rendered.
5. A verbal mistake in the name of the corporation, in the first suit, does not render it void; and the judgment will be evidence in the second, if there is an averment that the defendant is the same corporation sued by the erroneous name in the first suit.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Indiana.

The action was brought on a judgment obtained in the State court of Ohio against the defendant, by the name of the president, directors, and company of the Lafayette Insurance Company. No appearance was made by any one, but service was had on the agent of defendant. The defendant's real corporate name was "The Lafayette Insurance Company," and it was incorporated under the law of the State of Indiana, and did insurance business in Ohio by its agent. The statute of Ohio authorized service of process on such agent.

*Mr. Gillett*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. O. H. Smith*, for defendants.

\* Mr Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 405 ]

This is a writ of error to the circuit court of the United States for the district of Indiana, in an action of debt on a judgment recovered in the commercial court of Cincinnati, in the State of Ohio. In the declaration, the plaintiffs are averred to be citizens of Ohio; and they "complain of the Lafayette Insurance Company, a citizen of the State of Indiana." This averment is not sufficient to show jurisdiction. It does not appear from it that the Lafayette Insurance Company is a corporation; or, if it be such, by the law of what State it was created. The averment, that the company is a citizen of the State of Indiana, can have no sensible meaning attached to it. This court does not hold, that either a voluntary association of persons, or an association into a body politic, created by law, is a citizen of a State within the meaning of the constitution. And, therefore, if the defective averment in the declaration had not been otherwise supplied, the suit must have been dismissed. But the plaintiff's replication alleges that the



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defendants are a corporation, created under the laws of the State of Indiana, having its principal place of business in that State. These allegations are confessed by the demurrer; and they bring the case within the decision of this court in *Marshall v. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company*, 16 How. 314, and the previous decisions therein referred to.

Upon the merits, it was objected that the judgment declared on was rendered by the commercial court of Cincinnati, without jurisdiction over the person sued; and the argument was, that as this corporation was created by a law of the State of Indiana, it could have no existence out of that State, and, consequently, could not be sued in Ohio.

[ \* 406 ]     \* The precise facts upon which this objection depends, are that this corporation was created by a law of the State of Indiana, and had its principal office for business within that State. It had also an agent authorized to contract for insurance, who resided in the State of Ohio. The contract on which the judgment in question was recovered was made in Ohio, and was to be there performed; because it was a contract with the citizens of Ohio to insure property within that State. A statute of Ohio makes special provision for suits against foreign corporations, founded on contracts of insurance there made by them with citizens of that State; and one of its provisions is, that service of process on such resident agent of the foreign corporation shall be "as effectual as though the same were served on the principal."

The question is, whether a judgment recovered in Ohio against the Indiana corporation, upon a contract made by that corporation in Ohio with citizens of that State to insure property there, after the law above mentioned was enacted—service of process having been made on such resident agent—is a judgment entitled to the same faith and credit in the State of Indiana as in the State of Ohio, under the constitution and laws of the United States.

No question has been made that this judgment would be held binding in the State of Ohio, and would there be satisfied out of any property of the defendants existing in that State.

The act of May 26, 1790, (1 Stats. at Large, 122,) gives to a judgment rendered in any State such faith and credit as it had in the courts of the State where it was recovered. But this provision, though general in its terms, does not extend to judgments rendered against persons not amenable to the jurisdiction rendering the judgments. *D'Arcy v. Ketchum*, 11 How. 165. And, consequently, notwithstanding the act of congress, whenever an action is brought in one State on a judgment recovered in another, it is not enough

to show it to be valid in the State where it was rendered; it must also appear that the defendant was either personally within the jurisdiction of the State, or had legal notice of the suit, and was in some way subject to its laws, so as to be bound to appear and contest the suit, or suffer a judgment by default. In more general terms, the doctrine of this court, as well as of the courts of many of the States, is, that this act of congress was not designed to displace that principle of natural justice which requires a person to have notice of a suit before he can be conclusively bound by its result; nor those rules of public law which protect persons and property within one State from the exercise of jurisdiction over them by another.

\* This corporation, existing only by virtue of a law of [ \* 407 ] Indiana, cannot be deemed to pass personally beyond the limits of that State. *Bank of Augusta v. Earle*, 13 Pet. 519. But it does not necessarily follow that a valid judgment could be recovered against it only in that State. A corporation may sue in a foreign State, by its attorney there; and if it fails in the suit, be subject to a judgment for costs. And so if a corporation, though in Indiana, should appoint an attorney to appear, in an action brought in Ohio, and the attorney should appear, the court would have jurisdiction to render a judgment, in all respects as obligatory as if the defendant were within the State. The inquiry is not whether the defendant was personally within the State, but whether he, or some one authorized to act for him in reference to the suit, had notice and appeared; or, if he did not appear, whether he was bound to appear or suffer a judgment by default.

And the true question in this case is, whether this corporation had such notice of the suit, and was so far subject to the jurisdiction and laws of Ohio, that it was bound to appear, or take the consequences of non-appearance.

A corporation created by Indiana can transact business in Ohio only with the consent, express or implied, of the latter State. 13 Pet. 519. This consent may be accompanied by such conditions as Ohio may think fit to impose; and these conditions must be deemed valid and effectual by other States, and by this court, provided they are not repugnant to the constitution or laws of the United States, or inconsistent with those rules of public law which secure the jurisdiction and authority of each State from encroachment by all others, or that principle of natural justice which forbids condemnation without opportunity for defense.

In this instance, one of the conditions imposed by Ohio was, in effect, that the agent who should reside in Ohio and enter into con-

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tracts of insurance there in behalf of the foreign corporation, should also be deemed its agent to receive service of process in suits founded on such contracts. We find nothing in this provision either unreasonable in itself, or in conflict with any principle of public law. It cannot be deemed unreasonable that the State of Ohio should endeavor to secure to its citizens a remedy, in their domestic forum, upon this important class of contracts made and to be performed within that State, and fully subject to its laws; nor that proper means should be used to compel foreign corporations, transacting this business of insurance within the State, for their benefit and profit, to answer there for the breach of their contracts of insurance there made and to be performed.

[ \* 408 ] \*Nor do we think the means adopted to effect this object are open to the objection, that it is an attempt improperly to extend the jurisdiction of the State beyond its own limits to a person in another State. Process can be served on a corporation only by making service thereof on some one or more of its agents. The law may, and ordinarily does, designate the agent or officer, on whom process is to be served. For the purpose of receiving such service, and being bound by it, the corporation is identified with such agent or officer. The corporate power to receive and act on such service, so far as to make it known to the corporation, is thus vested in such officer or agent. Now, when this corporation sent its agent into Ohio, with authority to make contracts of insurance there, the corporation must be taken to assent to the condition upon which alone such business could be there transacted by them; that condition being, that an agent, to make contracts, should also be the agent of the corporation, to receive service of process in suits on such contracts; and, in legal contemplation, the appointment of such an agent clothed him with power to receive notice, for and on behalf of the corporation, as effectually as if he were designated in the charter as the officer on whom process was to be served; or, as if he had received from the president and directors a power of attorney to that effect. The process was served within the limits and jurisdiction of Ohio, upon a person qualified by law to represent the corporation there in respect to such service; and notice to him was notice to the corporation which he there represented, and for whom he was empowered to take notice.

We consider this foreign corporation, entering into contracts made and to be performed in Ohio, was under an obligation to attend, by its duly authorized attorney, on the courts of that State,

in suits founded on such contracts, whereof notice should be given by due process of law, served on the agent of the corporation resident in Ohio, and qualified by the law of Ohio and the presumed assent of the corporation to receive and act on such notice; that this obligation is well founded in policy and morals, and not inconsistent with any principle of public law; and that when so sued on such contracts in Ohio, the corporation was personally amenable to that jurisdiction; and we hold such a judgment, recovered after such notice to be as valid as if the corporation had had its *habitat* within the State; that is, entitled to the same faith and credit in Indiana as in Ohio, under the constitution and laws of the United States.

We limit our decision to the case of a corporation acting in a State foreign to its creation, under a law of that State which recognized its existence, for the purposes of making contracts there and being sued on them, through notice to its contracting \*agents. The case of natural persons, and of other for- [\* 409] eign corporations, is attended with other considerations, which might or might not distinguish it; upon this we give no opinion.

This decision renders it unnecessary to consider the questions arising under the counts on the policy.

It was objected that the judgment recovered in the commercial court was against "the president, directors, and company of the Lafayette Insurance Company;" while this action is against the "Lafayette Insurance Company;" but the declaration describes the judgment correctly, and then avers that the judgment was recovered against the defendants by that other name. We must assume that this fact was proved; and the only question open here is, whether, if a mistake be made in the name of a defendant, and he fails to plead it in abatement, the judgment binds him, though called by a wrong name. Of this, we have no doubt. Evidence that it was an erroneous name of the same person must, therefore, be admissible; otherwise, a mistake in the defendant's name, instead of being available only by a plea in abatement, would render a judgment wholly inoperative.

In the case of the *Medway Cotton Manufactory v. Adams*, 10 Mass. 360, the plaintiffs, a corporation, declared on a promissory note made to Richardson, Metcalf, and Co., and averred that the maker promised the corporation by that name. The defendant demurred to the declaration, and assigned, in argument, the same cause which has been relied on at the bar in this case—that it was not competent to prove by parol evidence that the promisee of the

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note was the corporation, the name not being the same. The court held otherwise, and overruled the demurrer.

A similar decision was made in an action of debt on bond by the supreme court of New York, in the case of *New York African Society v. Varick et al.*, 13 Johns. 38. See, also, *Inhabitants, &c. v. String*, 5 Halst. 323; and the authorities cited in the cases in New York and Massachusetts.

The decision of the circuit court is affirmed.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL dissented.

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JOSHUA R. STANFORD, Plaintiff in Error, v. CLAY TAYLOR.

18 H. 409.

SPANISH LAND TITLES IN MISSOURI—CONCLUSIVENESS OF SURVEY AFTER CONFIRMATION.

1. Where there is a tract of land with specific boundaries, confirmed according to those ascertained boundaries, the confirmer has a title on which he can maintain ejectment.
2. But where the claim has no ascertained or specific boundaries, and the judgment of confirmation requires a survey to ascertain its location, the executive department alone can fix the boundaries by the proper survey, and that, when made, is conclusive in an action at law.
3. Extrinsic testimony cannot be received to show that by the survey the land was not correctly located.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the district of Missouri.

The case is well stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Lawrence* and *Mr. Johnson*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Williams*, for defendant.

[\* 411] \*Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court.

The plaintiff, Stanford, sued Taylor in ejectment, claiming title to the land in dispute under a concession from “Don Francisco Cruzat, lieutenant governor, dated in 1785, who decreed as follows:

“In view of what is set forth in the present memorial, presented by Angela Chovin, widow of the deceased Miguel Bolica, of this town of St. Louis, under date of the sixth of May of the current year, I have granted to her in proprietary title, for her, her heirs, and others who may represent her right, forty arpens front of land upon forty in depth, along the river called *De los Padres*, (Des Pères,) from the north to the south, which is bounded on the one

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side by the lands of Louis Robert, and on the other by the domain of the king," &c.

This claim was confirmed in general terms to Jean F. Perry, as assignee, by the board of commissioners sitting at St. Louis, in 1811, for 1,600 arpens, "situate in the district of St. Louis, on the river Des Pères," and ordered to be surveyed "conformably to the possession, by virtue of a concession, or order of survey, from Francis Cruzat, lieutenant general."

The plaintiff derives title under Perry.

The survey directed to be made by the board of commissioners was not executed till 1834, when the surveyor [\*412] general ordered the land to be located west of Louis Robert's tract, and on both sides of the river Des Pères. But the plaintiff insists that the land granted and confirmed adjoins Robert's tract on the east, and that the location is so plainly apparent on the face of the concession as not to require a survey; and, furthermore, he offered to show by proof that the possession of Perry, the confirmee, was part of a tract of land east of the tract of Louis Robert, of seven by forty arpens, and adjoining it; and, if located there, would include the premises in controversy. The court rejected the evidence offered, and permitted the defendant to give in evidence the official survey of the tract of 1,600 arpens; to overcome the effect of which, the plaintiff offered to prove that the official survey was improperly made west of Robert's tract, and not adjoining it; whereas it should have been made east of the same. This evidence was also rejected, when the court instructed the jury as follows: "The parties agreeing that the official survey of confirmation, under which the plaintiff claims the land in dispute, does not include the premises sued for, the jury ought to find for the defendant."

To the rejection of the parole evidence, and to the charge of the court, the plaintiff excepted.

The law is settled, that where there is a specific tract of land confirmed, according to ascertained boundaries, the confirmee takes a title on which he may sue in ejectment. The case of *Bissell v. Penrose*, 8 How. 317, lays down the true rule.

But where the claim has no certain limits, and the judgment of confirmation carries along with it the condition that the land shall be surveyed, and severed from the public domain and the lands of others, then it is not open to controversy, that the title attaches to no land; nor has a court of justice any authority in law to ascertain and establish its boundaries, this being reserved to the executive department. The case of *West v. Cochran*, 17 How. 403, need



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only be referred to as settling this point. And the question here is, whether the concession to Perry is indefinite and vague, and subject to be located at different places.

It is to be forty by forty arpens in extent; it is to lie along the river Des Pères, from the north to the south; and to be bounded on the one side by the lands of Louis Robert, and on the other by the domain of the king. On which side of Robert's land it is to lie, we are not informed, further than that it is to lie along the river from north to south. The record shows, that if surveyed west of Robert's tract, the forty by forty arpens includes the river Des Pères; but if surveyed east of Robert's land, it will not [ \* 413 ] include the river. The uncertainty of \*out-boundary in this instance is too manifest, in our opinion, to require discussion to show that a public survey is required to attach the concession to any land.

JAMES C. CONVERSE, Administrator, &c., Plaintiff in Error, v. BENJAMIN BURGESS, and others.

18 H. 413.

IMPROPER APPRAISEMENT OF IMPORTS—SUFFICIENCY OF NOTICE OF GROUNDS OF PROTEST.

1. The tariff act of 1846 required the collector to designate on the invoice at least one package of every invoice, and one package at least of every ten of goods, should he or the appraisers deem it necessary, to be opened and examined by the appraisers. This was not done in this case.
2. Proof was admissible, in action to recover the duties as improperly assessed, that the appraisers did not examine or see any of the original packages, but only samples, (of sugars,) which had been taken out several weeks before, and which could not afford a true criterion of their value.
3. A protest on the ground that the goods were not fairly and faithfully examined by the appraisers is sufficient to permit this evidence.
4. While it may be conceded that the judgment of the appraisers is conclusive, if made upon a sufficient examination, the proof of failure to examine one in ten, or indeed any of the packages, as the law requires, destroys the conclusiveness of their appraisal.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Massachusetts, and the case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Andros*, for defendants.

[ \* 414 ] \* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court. The intestate of the plaintiff is charged in this judgment

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for an excess of duties collected by him in his capacity of collector of customs at the port of Boston, under color of a law of the United States.

The defendants in April, 1850, imported into Boston an invoice of sugars from the Island of Cuba, and made entry as in case of goods purchased, by the production of the invoice and an oath that it exhibited a just and faithful account of the actual cost and all charges thereon, &c. The public appraisers advanced the valuation of the merchandise contained in the invoice ten per cent. above the invoice price, and made their return to the collector accordingly, the 14th May, 1850. From this valuation the defendants appealed, and merchant appraisers were appointed to make a new appraisement. These returned their report the 4th June, to the effect that the sugars could not have been purchased at the time of exportation for less than the sum assessed by the appraisers, at the principal markets of Cuba.

Duties were levied according to this appraisement, and also an additional duty of 20 per cent. under the 8th section of the act of 30th July, 1846. These duties were paid 4th June, 1850, under a protest, by the defendants, with the declared "intention \* of reclaiming the same or any part thereof as may be [ \* 415 ] found to have been illegally paid by them;" and affirm as the ground of their protest the "fair valuation in the invoice, and that the goods were not fairly and faithfully examined by the appraisers."

Upon the trial of the cause the importers (defendants) offered to prove that the merchant appraisers did not examine nor see any of the original packages of the merchandise in question, but only saw samples which had been taken on the 26th April, 1850, from one in ten of the packages described in the invoice; and that such samples so drawn and exposed to the air would not afford a true criterion by which to judge of the importation; and claimed the right to go behind the return of the said merchant appraisers, on the ground that they had not examined the sugars as required by law, and to put that as a question of fact to the jury, without alleging fraud.

The collector (plaintiff's intestate) objected to this evidence, and claimed that the decision of the appraisers was in the nature of an award and final under the statute, and not open under this protest, in the absence of fraud, to review.

The circuit court admitted this evidence, and decided that the importers (defendants) might go to the jury on the facts, whether the examination made by the merchant appraisers was in substance

and effect equivalent to an examination of one package in ten of the importation, and if it was not, that the appraisement was void.

A verdict and judgment were rendered in favor of the importers, and these decisions of the circuit court have been assigned for error in this court.

The right of an importer, who has paid money, under a valid protest, to a collector of the customs, for duties illegally assessed, to maintain an action for its return has been acknowledged by congress and in this court. 5 Stats. at Large, 727, c. 22; *Greely v. Thompson*, 10 How. 225. The only inquiries in such an action are, whether the duties have been legally charged, and does the protest conform to the act of congress above cited? The ascertainment of the value of imports, upon which the assessment of duties is made, is confided in the first instance to officers of the government, and, in the case of dissatisfaction of the importer with their assessment, to discreet and experienced merchants familiar with the character and value of the goods in question, whose decision is final, provided it is made in pursuance of law.

They are required by all reasonable ways or means in their power to ascertain, estimate, and appraise "the true and actual market value and wholesale price of the import," at the time and place or places specified in the statutes, "any invoice or [ \* 416 ] \* affidavit thereto to the contrary notwithstanding;" they are authorized "to call before them and examine upon oath or affirmation any owner, importer, consignee, or other person, touching any matter or thing they may deem material in ascertaining the true market value or wholesale price of any merchandise imported, and to require the production, on oath or affirmation, of any letters, accounts, or invoices in his possession relating to the same." It is the duty of the collector to designate on the invoice at least one package of every invoice, and one package at least of every ten packages of goods, wares, and merchandise, and a greater number, should he, or either of the appraisers, deem it necessary, to be opened, examined, and appraised, and shall order the package or packages so designated to the public stores for examination. 5 Stats. at Large, 563-565, §§ 16, 17, 21. The appraisers take an oath diligently and faithfully to examine and inspect such goods, wares, and merchandise as the collector may direct, and truly to report, to the best of their knowledge and belief, the true value thereof. 3 Stats. at Large, 735, § 16.

These acts of congress provide for the appointment, regulate the duties, and impose the limitations on the authority of the appraisers, and determine the conditions on which the validity of their assess-

ment depends. All their powers are derived from these acts, and it is their duty to observe the restrictions, and to obey the directions they contain. In the present instance, there was a neglect of the positive mandate "to open, examine, and appraise one package of every invoice, and one package, at least, of every ten packages of goods, wares, and merchandise;" and the jury have found, that the inquiry they made was not, in substance nor in effect, an equivalent for such an examination.

We are, therefore, of the opinion that the importer was not precluded by their return from disputing the sufficiency or accuracy of their assessment. But to enable the importer to do this, he must, before making payment of the duties, enter "a protest," in writing, signed by him, setting forth, "distinctly and specifically, the grounds of objection" to the payment of the duties. In the present instance there was a protest, to which there is no objection, except that its statement was not sufficiently distinct and specific. The ground of objection stated in the protest is, "that the goods were not fairly and faithfully examined by the appraisers."

And the proof offered was, that the appraisers did not examine nor see any of the original packages of the merchandise, and only saw samples which had been taken several weeks before, and which would not afford a true criterion by which to judge of the importation.

This statute was designed for practical use by men engaged \*in active commercial pursuits, and was intended [ \* 417 ] to superinduce a prompt and amicable settlement of differences between the government and the importer. The officers of the government on the one part, and the importer or his agent on the other, are brought into communication and intercourse by the act of entry of the import, and opportunities for explanation easily occur for every difference that may arise. We are not, therefore, disposed to exact any nice precision, nor to apply any strict rule of construction upon the notices required under this statute. It is sufficient if the importer indicates distinctly and definitely the source of his complaint, and his design to make it the foundation for a claim against the government.

In the present instance, he asserts that the goods were not fairly and faithfully examined by the appraisers. This, we think, was sufficient, without disclosing the grounds upon which he contended that the appraisement was unfair or unfaithful.

In *Jones v. Bird*, 5 B. & A. 837, which arose under a local act of parliament relating to the commissioners of sewers for Westminster, which provides that no plaintiff should recover in any

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action for anything done under certain acts of parliament, unless notice was given to the defendants, specifying the cause of action, Chief Justice Abbott said: "I think the notice sufficient, and that it ought not to be construed with great strictness, its object being merely to inform the defendant substantially of the ground of the complaint, but not of the mode or manner in which the injury has been sustained." And Justice Bayley said: "A notice of this sort does not require the same precision as a declaration. It is quite sufficient if it calls the attention of the defendants to the general nature of the injury, so that they may go to the premises and see what the ground of complaint is."

Under the act of 24 George II., c. 44, which required a notice to justices of the peace which should contain, "clearly and explicitly, the course of action which the party hath, or claimeth to have," the court of exchequer held a notice sufficient, although it was in the form of a declaration, and comprised not only the specific complaint, but all the redundancy and general averments which the experience of pleaders has led them to introduce into that description of pleadings, "for it could not have misled nor imposed any difficulty on the defendants, as to the tender of the amends they might have thought fit to make, and is, therefore, sufficient." *Gimbert v. Coyney*, *McClelland & Y.* 469.

These authorities disclose a sound principle of interpretation in regard to such notices, and support the principle we have announced in respect to that under consideration.

Upon the whole case, we think there is no error in the record, and judgment is affirmed.

[ \*418 ] \* Mr. Chief Justice TANEY, Mr. Justice DANIEL, and Mr. Justice NELSON dissented.

Mr. Chief Justice TANEY. I dissent from the opinion of the court, being of opinion that the grounds of objection are not "distinctly and specifically" set forth in the protest, within the meaning of the act of congress, and that the protest did not apprise the collector of the particular objection taken at the trial, and which could easily have been removed by another appraisement if it had been brought to the notice of the collector in the protest.

Mr. Justice DANIEL and Mr. Justice NELSON concurred with the Chief Justice.

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Stockton v. Ford.

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## RICHARD C. STOCKTON, Appellant, v. JAMES C. FORD.

18 H. 418.

## BAR OF FORMER ADJUDICATION.

1. This suit is between the same parties, and involves the same subject-matter, as the case reported in 11 How. 232; 18 Curtis, 609.
2. That suit is therefore a bar to the relief sought in the present suit, notwithstanding the plaintiff now endeavors to recover for attorney's fees and other costs.
3. The frame of the bill in the former case was one under which this claim might have been set up and litigated, and ought to have been set up, if intended to be asserted at all. It cannot be made the foundation of a new suit, to enforce it against the same property that was the subject of the former litigation.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana.

The case is sufficiently stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Stockton and Mr. Johnson*, for appellant.

*Mr. Duncan*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 419 ]

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the eastern district of Louisiana.

The bill was filed by the plaintiff to charge the plantation and slaves of the defendant with a judicial mortgage, originally obtained by one Prior, against the firm of N. and E. Ford and Co. The plaintiff claims an interest in this mortgage, first, by purchase on execution against Prior; and, second, by a trust created in the assignment of the same by Prior, under which the defendant derived title to it. The bill sets out the sale of the mortgage and purchase by the plaintiff, and also the assignment of the same by Prior to Jones, and by him to the defendant. The assignment to Jones provided for the payment first of the attorney's fees and all other costs out of the proceeds of the judgment, and the balance to be applied to the debts of Prior for which Jones was responsible, and the surplus, if any, to the assignor.

The plaintiff prayed that the defendant might be decreed to pay the attorney's fees and costs on obtaining the judicial mortgage, according to the condition of the assignment; and also any balance that might be found due after satisfying the debts for which Jones was responsible.

The defendant, among other defenses, set up a former suit in bar.

A previous bill had been filed by the plaintiff against the defendant, seeking to foreclose this judicial mortgage, in which the same



title as in this case under the execution and sale against Prior was relied on. And, among other defenses to that suit, the defendant set up the assignment of the mortgage by Prior to Jones previous to the said sale on execution, and by Jones to the defendant.

This right of the plaintiff to the judicial mortgage under the sale on execution, and of the defendant under the assignments, were directly involved in that suit, and presented the principal questions in the case. The validity of the assignments over the claim of the plaintiff was maintained by the judgment of the court below, and which was affirmed on appeal to this court. 11 How. 232. This court, after a full examination of the pleadings and proof, say, "that in any view, therefore, that can be properly taken of the case, the plaintiff has shown no right or interest in the judicial mortgage, which he seeks to enforce against the plantation and slaves in question. The whole interest is in the defendant."

The court also observed, "that the assignment (to Jones) was made upon full consideration, without any concealment, or, for aught that appears, intent to hinder and delay creditors; [ \* 420 ] and \* was well known to the plaintiff long before he became the purchaser at the sheriff's sale. It passed the legal interest in the judicial mortgage out of Prior, and vested it in Jones, as early as the 12th of March, 1840, and we are wholly unable to perceive any ground of equity in the plaintiff, or of those under whom he holds, for disturbing it through a judgment against the assignor, rendered nearly two years afterwards. The sheriff's sale, therefore, could not operate to pass any interest in it to the plaintiff."

One of the questions now sought to be agitated again is precisely the same as this one in the previous suit; namely, the right of the plaintiff to the judicial mortgage under the execution and sale against Prior. The other is somewhat varied; namely, the equitable right or interest in the mortgage of the plaintiff, as the attorney of Prior, for the fees and costs provided for in the assignment to Jones. But this question was properly involved in the former case, and might have been there raised and determined. The neglect of the plaintiff to avail himself of it, even if it were tenable, furnishes no reason for another litigation. The right of the respective parties to the judicial mortgage was the main question in the former suit. That issue, of course, involved the whole of any partial interest in the mortgage. We are satisfied, therefore, that the former suit constitutes a complete bar to the present.

The court, in the former suit, also expressed the opinion that the plaintiff was not in a situation to maintain his claim of title to the

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mortgage under the execution and sale against Prior; as it appeared in that case that he was the attorney of Prior in the judicial mortgage, and stood in that relation to Jones at the time of the purchase, and, for aught that appears, had made the purchase without his knowledge or consent; and that, under such circumstances, the purchase would enure to the benefit of the client and those holding under him.

It is due to the plaintiff to say, that the evidence in this case, explanatory of the point in the former, shows that he did not stand in the relation of attorney to Jones at the time of the sale; or, at least, had no reason to suppose that he stood in that relation; and that no just ground for censure exists in the transaction against him—the explanatory evidence has fully removed it.

We think the decree below is right, and should be affirmed.

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STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA v. THE WHEELING AND BELMONT BRIDGE  
COMPANY *et al.*

18 H 421.

POWER OF CONGRESS UNDER THE COMMERCE CLAUSE OF THE CONSTITUTION—LEGISLATIVE INTERFERENCES WITH JUDICIAL FUNCTIONS.

1. The majority of the court in this case, as reported in 13 How. 518; 19 Curtis, 621; held that the erection of the bridge, so far as it interfered with the free and unobstructed navigation of the Ohio river, was inconsistent with and a violation of acts of congress, and was not protected by the legislation of Virginia, because that statute was in conflict with the acts of congress.
2. The court was also of opinion that, under the power vested in congress to regulate commerce among the States, its legislation on the subject was valid.
3. And the court is of opinion that the power to regulate commerce includes the authority to license and authorize the erection of bridges across navigable streams, and to prescribe their height, location, and other circumstances affecting their relation to navigation.
4. In declaring by statute, therefore, that the bridge, as it stood when the decree in this case was rendered, in 1852, was a lawful structure, anything in the laws of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding, congress acted upon a subject within its power and control.
5. The effect of this statute was not to declare void the decree of the court already rendered. It did not affect the fact that, at the time the decree was rendered, this bridge was a nuisance, and by the law then in force ought to be abated.
6. Nor could it, nor did it, affect the right of plaintiff to the costs recovered in that suit, nor, if damages had been recovered, would they have been released.
7. But that which, by the law as it stood, was liable to be removed as a nuisance, is now by law no longer a nuisance. The foundation on which that part of the decree was based is gone; and as this is effected by a lawful exercise of the power of congress, the decree can no further be executed.

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8. Nor is the act of congress liable to the objection that it gives a preference to the ports of one State over those of another.
9. Nor is it void as being in conflict with the compact between the States of Virginia and Kentucky. No such compact between States can impose a restriction on the power granted congress by the constitution.

THIS case was originally brought in this court as a suit in equity, a State being party plaintiff; and the principal case is reported in 13 How. 518; 19 Curtis, 621.

After the decree ordering the abatement of the bridge, congress enacted, (10 Stats. at Large, 112,) "that the bridges across the Ohio river at Wheeling, in the State of Virginia, and at Bridgeport, in the State of Ohio, abutting on Zane's Island, in said river, are hereby declared to be lawful structures, in their present positions and elevations, and shall be so held and taken to be, anything in the law or laws of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding," and said bridges were declared post-roads, and the company was authorized to maintain them in that position, and vessels navigating the river were required to regulate the use of their vessels and boats, and the pipes and chimneys belonging to them, so as not to interfere with the elevation and construction of said bridges.

The case now came on to be heard on several motions to enforce the original decree by process of attachment for contempt, and in regard to an injunction granted by Mr. Justice GRIER in vacation against the bridge company, which the company had disregarded.

*Mr. Edwin M. Stanton*, for complainant.

*Mr. Johnson and Mr. Charles M. Russell*, for defendants.

[ \* 429 ]      \* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

The motion in this case is founded upon a bill filed to carry into execution a decree of the court, rendered against the defendants at the adjourned term in May, 1852, which decree declared the bridge erected by them across the Ohio river, between Wheeling and Zane's Island, to be an obstruction of the free navigation of the said river, and thereby occasioned a special damage to the plaintiff, for which there was not an adequate remedy at law, and directed that the obstruction be removed, either by elevating the bridge to a height designated, or by abatement.

Since the rendition of this decree, and on the 31st August, 1852, an act of congress has been passed as follows: "That the bridges across the Ohio river at Wheeling, in the State of Virginia, and at Bridgeport, in the State of Ohio, abutting on Zane's Island, in said river, are hereby declared to be lawful structures in their present

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positions and elevations, and shall be so held and taken to be, anything in the law or laws of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding."

And further: "That the said bridges be declared to be and are established post-roads for the passage of the mails of the United States, and that the Wheeling and Belmont Bridge Company are authorized to have and maintain their bridges at their present site and elevation; and the officers and crews of all vessels and boats navigating said river are required to regulate the use of their said vessels, and of any pipes or chimneys belonging thereto, so as not to interfere with the elevation and construction of said bridges."

The defendants rely upon this act of congress as furnishing authority for the continuance of the bridge as constructed, and as superseding the effect and operation of the decree of the court previously rendered, declaring it an obstruction to the navigation.

On the part of the plaintiff, it is insisted that the act is unconstitutional and void, which raises the principal question in the case.

In order to a proper understanding of this question it is \*material to recur to the ground and principles upon [\*430] which the majority of the court proceeded in rendering the decree now sought to be enforced.

The bridge had been constructed under an act of the legislature of the State of Virginia; and it was admitted that act conferred full authority upon the defendants for the erection, subject only to the power of congress in the regulation of commerce. It was claimed, however, that congress had acted upon the subject and had regulated the navigation of the Ohio river, and had thereby secured to the public, by virtue of its authority, the free and unobstructed use of the same; and that the erection of the bridge, so far as it interfered with the enjoyment of this use, was inconsistent with and in violation of the acts of congress, and destructive of the right derived under them; and that, to the extent of this interference with the free navigation of the river, the act of the legislature of Virginia afforded no authority or justification. It was in conflict with the acts of congress, which were the paramount law.

This being the view of the case taken by a majority of the court, they found no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion, that the obstruction of the navigation of the river, by the bridge, was a violation of the right secured to the public by the constitution and laws of congress, nor in applying the appropriate remedy in behalf of the plaintiff. The ground and principles upon which the court proceeded will be found reported in 13 How. 518.

Since, however, the rendition of this decree, the acts of congress,

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already referred to, have been passed, by which the bridge is made a post-road for the passage of the mails of the United States, and the defendants are authorized to have and maintain it at its present site and elevation, and requiring all persons navigating the river to regulate such navigation so as not to interfere with it.

So far, therefore, as this bridge created an obstruction to the free navigation of the river, in view of the previous acts of congress, they are to be regarded as modified by this subsequent legislation; and, although it still may be an obstruction in fact, is not so in the contemplation of law. We have already said, and the principle is undoubted, that the act of the legislature of Virginia conferred full authority to erect and maintain the bridge, subject to the exercise of the power of congress to regulate the navigation of the river. That body having in the exercise of this power, regulated the navigation consistent with its preservation and continuation, the authority to maintain it would seem to be complete. That authority combines the concurrent powers of both governments, State and federal, which, if not sufficient, certainly none can be found in our system of government.

[ \* 431 ] \* We do not enter upon the question, whether or not congress possess the power, under the authority in the constitution, "to establish post-offices and post-roads," to legalize this bridge; for, conceding that no such powers can be derived from this clause, it must be admitted that it is, at least, necessarily included in the power conferred to regulate commerce among the several States. The regulation of commerce includes intercourse and navigation, and, of course, the power to determine what shall or shall not be deemed in judgment of law an obstruction to navigation; and that power, as we have seen, has been exercised consistent with the continuance of the bridge.

But it is urged, that the act of congress cannot have the effect and operation to annul the judgment of the court already rendered, or the rights determined thereby in favor of the plaintiff. This, as a general proposition, is certainly not to be denied, especially as it respects adjudication upon the private rights of parties. When they have passed into judgment the right becomes absolute, and it is the duty of the court to enforce it.

The case before us, however, is distinguishable from this class of cases, so far as it respects that portion of the decree directing the abatement of the bridge. Its interference with the free navigation of the river constituted an obstruction of a public right secured by acts of congress.

But, although this right of navigation be a public right common

to all, yet, a private party sustaining special damage by the obstruction may, as has been held in this case, maintain an action at law against the party creating it, to recover his damages; or, to prevent irreparable injury, file a bill in chancery for the purpose of removing the obstruction. In both cases, the private right to damages, or to the removal, arises out of the unlawful interference with the enjoyment of the public right, which, as we have seen, is under the regulation of congress. Now, we agree, if the remedy in this case had been an action at law, and a judgment rendered in favor of the plaintiff for damages, the right to these would have passed beyond the reach of the power of congress. It would have depended, not upon the public right of the free navigation of the river, but upon the judgment of the court. The decree before us, so far as it respects the costs adjudged, stands upon the same principles, and is unaffected by the subsequent law. But that part of the decree, directing the abatement of the obstruction, is executory, a continuing decree, which requires not only the removal of the bridge, but enjoins the defendants against any reconstruction or continuance. Now, whether it is a future existing or continuing obstruction depends upon the question whether or not it interferes with the right of navigation. If, in the meantime, \* since the decree, this right has been modified by the [\* 432] competent authority, so that the bridge is no longer an unlawful obstruction, it is quite plain the decree of the court cannot be enforced. There is no longer any interference with the enjoyment of the public right inconsistent with law, no more than there would be where the plaintiff himself had consented to it, after the rendition of the decree. Suppose the decree had been executed, and after that the passage of the law in question, can it be doubted but that the defendants would have had a right to reconstruct it? And is it not equally clear that the right to maintain it, if not abated, existed from the moment of the enactment?

A class of cases that have frequently occurred in the State courts contain principles analogous to those involved in the present case. The purely internal streams of a State which are navigable belong to the riparian owners to the thread of the stream, and, as such, they have a right to use the waters and bed beneath, for their own private emolument, subject only to the public right of navigation. They may construct wharves or dams or canals for the purpose of subjecting the stream to the various uses to which it may be applied, subject to this public easement. But, if these structures materially interfere with the public right, the obstruction may be removed or abated as a public nuisance.



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In respect to these purely internal streams of a State, the public right of navigation is exclusively under the control and regulation of the State legislature; and in cases where these erections or obstructions to the navigation are constructed under a law of the State, or sanctioned by legislative authority, they are neither a public nuisance subject to abatement, nor is the individual who may have sustained special damage from their interference with the public use entitled to any remedy for his loss. So far as the public use of the stream is concerned, the legislature having the power to control and regulate it, the statute authorizing the structure, though it may be a real impediment to the navigation, makes it lawful. 5 Wend. 448, 449; 15 Ib. 113; 17 T. R. 195; 20 Ib. 90, 101; 5 Cow. 165.

It is also urged that this act of congress is void, for the reason that it is inconsistent with the compact between the States of Virginia and Kentucky, at the time of the admission of the latter into the Union, by which it was agreed, "that the use and navigation of the river Ohio, so far as the territory of the proposed, or the territory that shall remain within the limits of this commonwealth, lies thereon, shall be free and common to the citizens of the United States," and which compact was assented to by congress at the time of the admission of the State.

This court held, in the case of *Green et al. v. Biddle*, 2 [ \* 433 ] Wheat. \* 1, that an act of the legislature of Kentucky in contravention of the compact was null and void, within the provision of the constitution forbidding a State to pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts. But that is not the question here. The question here is, whether or not the compact can operate as a restriction upon the power of congress under the constitution to regulate commerce among the several States? Clearly not. Otherwise congress and two States would possess the power to modify and alter the constitution itself.

This is so plain that it is unnecessary to pursue the argument further. But we may refer to the case of *Wilson v. Mason*, 1 Cranch, 88, 92, where it was held that this compact, which stipulated that rights acquired under the commonwealth of Virginia shall be decided according to the then existing laws, could not deprive congress of the power to regulate the appellate jurisdiction of this court, and prevent a review where none was given in the State law existing at the time of the compact. Again, it is insisted that the act of congress is void, as being inconsistent with the clause in the ninth section of article first of the constitution, which declares that "no preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce or

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revenue to the ports of one State over those of another ; nor shall vessels bound to or from one State be obliged to enter, clear, or pay duties in another.”

It is urged that the interruption of the navigation of the steamboats engaged in commerce and conveyance of passengers upon the Ohio river at Wheeling from the erection of the bridge, and the delay and expense arising therefrom, virtually operate to give a preference to this port over that of Pittsburg ; that the vessels to and from Pittsburg navigating the Ohio and Mississippi rivers are not only subjected to this delay and expense in the course of the voyage, but that the obstruction will necessarily have the effect to stop the trade and business at Wheeling, or divert the same in some other direction or channel of commerce. Conceding all this to be true, a majority of the court are of opinion that the act of congress is not inconsistent with the clause of the constitution referred to—in other words, that is not giving a preference to the ports of one State over those of another, within the true meaning of that provision. There are many acts of congress passed in the exercise of this power to regulate commerce, providing for a special advantage to the port or ports of one State, and which very advantage may incidentally operate to the prejudice of the ports in a neighboring State, which have never been supposed to conflict with this limitation upon its power. The improvement of rivers and harbors, the erection of light-houses, and other facilities of commerce, may be referred to as examples. It will not do to say that the exercise of an \*admitted power of congress con- [ \* 434 ]ferred by the constitution is to be withheld, if it appears, or can be shown, that the effect and operation of the law may incidentally extend beyond the limitation of the power. Upon any such interpretation, the principal object of the framers of the instrument in conferring the power would be sacrificed to the subordinate consequences resulting from its exercise. These consequences and incidents are very proper considerations to be urged upon congress for the purpose of dissuading that body from its exercise, but afford no ground for denying the power itself, or the right to exercise it.

The court are also of opinion that, according to the true exposition of this prohibition upon the power of congress, the law in question cannot be regarded as in conflict with it.

The propositions originally introduced into the convention, from which this clause in the constitution was derived, declared that congress shall not have power to compel vessels belonging to citizens or foreigners to enter or pay duties or imposts in any other State than that to which they were bound, nor to clear from any

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other than that in which their cargoes were laden. Nor shall any privilege or immunity be granted to any vessels on entering or clearing out, or paying duties or imposts, in one State in preference to another. Also, that congress shall not have power to fix or establish the particular ports for collecting the duties or imposts in any State, unless the State should neglect to fix them upon notice. I give merely the substance of the several propositions.

Luther Martin, in his letter to the legislature of Maryland, says that these propositions were introduced into the convention by the Maryland delegation; and that without them, he observes, it would have been in the power of congress to compel ships sailing in or out of the Chesapeake to clear or enter at Norfolk, or some port in Virginia—a regulation that would be injurious to the commerce of Maryland. It appears also, from the reports of the convention, that several of the delegates from that State expressed apprehensions that under the power to regulate commerce congress might favor ports of particular States, by requiring vessels destined to other States to enter and clear at the ports of the favored ones, as a vessel bound for Baltimore to enter and clear at Norfolk.

These several propositions finally took the form of the clause in question, namely: “No preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce or revenue to the ports of one State over those of another; nor shall vessels bound to or from one State be obliged to enter or clear or pay duties in another.” 1 Elliott’s Deb. 266, 270, 279, 280, 311, 375; 5 Ib. 478, 483, 502, 545.

The power to establish their ports of entry and clear-  
[ \* 435 ] ance by \* the States was given up, and left to congress.

But the rights of the States were secured, by the exemption of vessels from the necessity of entering or paying duties in the ports of any State other than that to which they were bound, or to obtain a clearance from any port other than at the home port, or that from which they sailed. And, also, by the provision that no preference should be given, by any regulation of commerce or revenue, to the ports of one State over those of another. So far as the regulation of revenue is concerned, the prohibition in the clause does not seem to have been very important, as, in a previous section, (8,) it was declared, that “all duties, imposts, and excises, shall be uniform throughout the United States;” and, as to a preference by a regulation of commerce, the history of the provision, as well as its language, looks to a prohibition against granting privileges or immunities to vessels entering or clearing from the ports of one State over those of another. That these privileges and immunities, whatever they may be in the judgment of congress,

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shall be common and equal in all the ports of the several States. Thus much is undoubtedly embraced in the prohibition; and it may, certainly, also embrace any other description of legislation looking to a direct privilege or preference of the ports of any particular State over those of another. Indeed, the clause, in terms, seems to import a prohibition against some positive legislation by congress to this effect, and not against any incidental advantages that might possibly result from the legislation of congress upon other subjects connected with commerce, and confessedly within its power.

Besides, it is a mistake to assume that congress is forbidden to give a preference to a port in one State over a port in another. Such preference is given in every instance where it makes a port in one State a port of entry, and refuses to make another port in another State a port of entry. No greater preference, in one sense, can be more directly given than in this way; and yet, the power of congress to give such preference has never been questioned. Nor can it be without asserting that the moment congress makes a port in one State a port of entry, it is bound, at the same time, to make all other ports in all other States ports of entry. The truth seems to be, that what is forbidden is, not discrimination between individual ports within the same or different States, but discrimination between States; and if so, in order to bring this case within the prohibition, it is necessary to show, not merely discrimination between Pittsburg and Wheeling, but discrimination between the ports of Virginia and those of Pennsylvania.

Upon the whole, without pursuing the examination further, our conclusion is, that, so far as respects that portion of the decree which directs the alteration or abatement of the bridge, it \* cannot be carried into execution since the act of con- [\* 436] gress which regulates the navigation of the Ohio river, consistent with the existence and continuance of the bridge; and that this part of the motion, in behalf of the plaintiff, must be denied. But that, so far as respects that portion of the decree which directs the costs to be paid by the defendants, the motion must be granted.

A motion has also been made, on behalf of the plaintiff, for attachments against the president of the bridge company and others, for disobedience of an injunction issued by Mr. Justice Grier, in vacation, on the 27th June, 1854.

It appears that since the rendition of the decree of this court and the passage of the act of congress, and before any proceedings taken to enforce the execution of the decree, notwithstanding this act,

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the bridge was broken down, in a gale of wind, leaving only some of the cables suspended from the towers across the river. Upon the happening of this event, a bill was filed by the plaintiff, and an application for the injunction above mentioned was made, which was granted, enjoining the defendants, their officers and agents, against a reconstruction of the bridge, unless in conformity with the requirements of the previous decree in the case. The object of the injunction was to suspend the work, together with the great expenses attending it, until the determination of the question by this court as to the force and effect of the act of congress, in respect to the execution of the decree. The defendants did not appear upon the notice given of the motion for the injunction, and it was, consequently, granted without opposition.

After the writ was served, it was disobeyed, the defendants proceeding in the reconstruction of the bridge, which they had already begun before the issuing or service of the process.

A motion is now made for attachments against the persons mentioned for this disobedience and contempt.

A majority of the court are of opinion, inasmuch as we have arrived at the conclusion that the act of congress afforded full authority to the defendants to reconstruct the bridge, and the decree directing its alteration or abatement could not, therefore, be carried into execution after the enactment of this law, and inasmuch as the granting of an attachment for the disobedience is a question resting in the discretion of the court, that, under all the circumstances of the case, the motion should be denied.

Some of the judges also entertain doubts as to the regularity of the proceedings in pursuance of which the injunction was issued.

Mr. Justice WAYNE, Mr. Justice GRIER, and Mr. Justice CURTIS, are of opinion that, upon the case presented, the attachment for contempt should issue, and in which opinion I concur.

[ \* 437 ]     \* The motion for the attachment is denied, and the injunction dissolved.

Mr. Justice McLEAN, dissenting.

A motion was made, at the last term, for process of contempt against the bridge company, for not complying with the decree of this court to elevate or abate the suspension bridge, or open a draw in the bridge over the western branch of the Ohio, so as to afford a safe channel for steamboats when the water is too high for them to pass under the suspension bridge; and also for not obeying the injunction granted, &c.

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In opposition to this motion the act of congress of the 31st of August, 1852, is set up, which purports to legalize both bridges.

The 6th section of the above act provides “that the bridges across the Ohio river at Wheeling, in the State of Virginia, and at Bridgeport, in the State of Ohio, abutting on Zane’s Island, in said river, are hereby declared to be lawful structures, in their present position and elevation, and shall be so held and taken to be, anything in any law or laws of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding.”

7th section. “And be it further enacted, that the said bridges are declared to be and are established post-roads for the passage of the mails of the United States, and that the Wheeling and Belmont Bridge Company are authorized to have and maintain their said bridges at their present site and elevation; and the officers and crews of all vessels and boats navigating said river are required to regulate the use of their said vessels and boats, and of any pipes or chimneys belonging thereto, so as not to interfere with the elevation and construction of said bridges.”

This court, in the exercise of its judicial functions, with the approbation of seven of its members, which included all the judges present, with but one exception, took jurisdiction of a complaint made by the State of Pennsylvania against the Wheeling Bridge Company, which was charged with having constructed its bridge so low as to cause a material obstruction to the commerce of the Ohio river; and which was especially injurious to the State of Pennsylvania, which had expended several millions of dollars in the construction of lines of improvement from Philadelphia to Pittsburg—such as turnpike roads, railroads, canals, and slack-water navigation—over which more than fifty millions’ worth of property were transported annually, in connection with the Ohio river; and that any material obstruction to the navigation of the river by the bridge would be injurious to that State, by lessening the transportation of passengers and freight on the above lines.

After a very tedious and minute investigation of the facts of \* the case, which embraced the reports of practical [ \* 438 ] engineers, depositions from the most experienced river men, statements of the stages of water in the river throughout the year, and also after a full consideration of the legal principles applicable to the matter in controversy, six of the members of this tribunal, two only dissenting, were brought to the conclusion that the bridge was a material obstruction to the navigation of the river, at seasons of the year and under circumstances which rendered its navigation most important to the public and to the complainant,



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and that there was no adequate remedy for it by an action at common law.

From the facts developed in the course of the investigation, it appeared that the seven passenger packets, which plied between Cincinnati and Pittsburg, whose progress was obstructed by the bridge, conveyed about one half of the goods, in value, which were transported on the river, and three fourths of the passengers between the above cities. That each packet transported annually thirty thousand nine hundred and sixty tons of freight, and twelve thousand passengers.

It appeared that a steamboat drawing five feet water, and whose chimneys were seventy-nine feet six inches high, could never pass under the apex of the bridge, at any stage of the water, without lowering its chimneys. And the court found by lowering the chimneys, including the expense of machinery, and delay of time, without an estimate as to the dangers incurred by the operation, that a tax was imposed upon the seven packets, annually, of \$5,598.00, which sum was exacted from the owners, for the accommodation of the crossing public and the bridge proprietors.

The court also found that the cost of each packet, per running hour, was eight dollars and thirty-three cents; and, as was estimated, if the chimney should be made shorter, so as to pass under the bridge at an ordinary stage of water, it would cause the average loss of four hours in each trip between Cincinnati and Pittsburg, which would amount to the sum of thirty-three dollars and thirty-two cents, which, being multiplied by sixty, the average number of trips each season, would amount to the sum of \$1,999.20; and this, being multiplied by seven, would make the sum of \$13,994.40, which would be an annual loss by the owners of these packets.

The court also found, that from the great weight of the chimneys of the packets, and other boats of that class, they could not be lowered by hinges at the tops; that they could only be let down at the hurricane deck by means of a derrick. The average weight of the chimneys, which must be lowered upon each of the [ \* 439 ] large boats, was about four tons; and if this \* enormous weight, hanging over the cabin, or rather over the berths of the passengers, in the process of lowering, should come down by the run, their weight would crush the hurricane deck, break through the berths of the cabin, and be arrested, probably, only by the cargo or the lower flooring of the vessel.

For these reasons, and others contained in the opinion of the court, they came to the decision that the bridge obstructed the navigation of the Ohio, and to the irremediable injury at law of the

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public works of Pennsylvania. But, to avoid any greater hardship on the bridge owners than would be required by the maintenance of the commercial right, this court decreed that if the defendant would open a draw in the western channel which would admit the passage of boats, when, from the high water, they could not pass under the suspension bridge, that it would remove all reasonable ground of complaint by the plaintiffs. But this it refused to do, and invoked the legislation of congress successfully, in procuring the passage of the act above cited.

That congress have a constitutional power to regulate commerce among the States, as with foreign nations, must be admitted. And where the constitution imposes no restriction on this power, it is exercised at discretion; and the correction of impolicy, or abuse, is only through the ballot-box. During the existence of the embargo, in the year 1808, it was contended that, under the commercial power, an embargo could not be imposed, as it destroyed commerce. But it was held otherwise; so that the constitutionality of a regulation of commerce by congress does not depend upon the policy and justice of such an act, but generally upon its discretion.

An embargo is a temporary regulation, and is designed for the protection of commerce, though, for a time, it may suspend it. There are, however, limitations on the exercise of the commercial power by congress. As stated in the opinion of the court, congress had regulated the commerce of the Ohio river. But all such regulations, before the passage of the above act, were of a general character, and tended to the security of transportation, whether of freight or passengers.

The decree in the Wheeling bridge case was the result of a judicial investigation, founded upon facts ascertained in the course of the hearing. It was strictly a judicial question. The complaint was an obstruction of commerce, by the bridge, to the injury of the complainant, and the court found the fact to be as alleged in the bill. It was said by Chief Justice Marshall, many years ago, that congress could do many things, but that it could not alter a fact. This it has attempted to do in the above act. An obstruction to the navigation of the river was, technically, a nuisance, and, in their decree, this court so pronounced.

\* The compact between Virginia and Kentucky, which [ \* 440 ] “declared, that the use and navigation of the river Ohio should be free and common to the citizens of the United States,” was incorporated into the Kentucky constitution of 1791, and received the sanction of congress in the admission of that State into the Union. This compact bound both parties; and this court held,

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that a violation of it by a law of Kentucky, called the occupying claimant law, was void, as it impaired the obligation of the compact. Virginia, no more than Kentucky, could violate any of its provisions, although they extended to citizens of the Union.

The effect that the act of congress shall have upon the decree of the court, I will now consider. This subject can be treated only with the profoundest respect for the legislative action of the nation, and with a sincere desire to give to it all the effect which such an expression should have.

The congress and the court constitute co-ordinate branches of the government; their duties are distinct and of a different character. The judicial power cannot legislate, nor can the legislative power act judicially. The constitution has declared, that the judicial power shall extend to all cases in law and equity arising under the constitution, the laws of the United States, and treaties, &c. All legislative powers are vested in congress. While these functionaries are limited to their appropriate duties as vested, there can be little or no conflict of jurisdiction.

From the organization of the legislative power, it is unfitted for the discharge of judicial duties; and the same may be said of this court in regard to legislation. It may therefore happen that, when either trenches upon the appropriate powers of the other, their acts are inoperative and void.

The judicial power is exercised in the decision of cases; the legislative, in making general regulations by the enactment of laws. The latter acts from considerations of public policy; the former by the pleadings and evidence in a case. From this view it is at once seen, that congress could not undertake to hear the complaint of Pennsylvania in this case, take testimony or cause it to be taken, examine the surveys and reports of engineers, decide the questions of law which arise on the admission of the testimony, and give the proper and legal effect to the evidence in the final decree. To do this is the appropriate duty of the judicial power. And this is what was done by this court, before the above act of congress was passed. The court held, that the bridge obstructed the navigation of the Ohio river, and that, consequently, it was a nuisance. The act declared the bridge to be a legal structure, and, consequently, that it was not a nuisance. Now, is this a legislative or a [ \*441 ] judicial act? Whether \*it be a nuisance or not, depends upon the fact of obstruction; and this would seem to be strictly a judicial question, to be decided on evidence produced by the parties in a case.

We do not speak of a public commercial right, but of an ob-

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struction to it, by which an individual wrong is done, that at law is irremediable. A regulation of the public right belongs exclusively to congress. It is a question of policy, which seldom, if ever, comes within the range of judicial action. All such questions belong to the legislative power.

The words of the seventh section of the act are, "that the said bridges are declared to be and are established post-roads for the passage of the mails of the United States; and that the Wheeling and Belmont Bridge Company are authorized to have and maintain their said bridges, at their present site and elevation; and the officers and crews of all vessels and boats navigating the river are required to regulate the use of their said vessels and boats, and of any pipes or chimneys belonging thereto, so as not to interfere with the elevation and construction of said bridges."

The provisions of this section are: 1. The bridges are declared to be post-roads; and, 2. The pipes and chimneys of the boats are required to be cut down, so as not to interfere with said bridges.

And, first, as to the effect of making the bridges post-roads:

By the act of the 7th July, 1838, all railroads are declared to be post-roads; and, for more than twenty years, all navigable waters on which steamboats regularly ply are established as post-roads.

The policy of extending the lines of post-roads on all railroads and navigable waters was to require, under a penalty, all boats and railroad cars to deposit in post-offices all letters which they may carry, so that the postage may be charged. It gives to the government no rights on these lines of communication, except where the mail may be carried under a contract, which, if obstructed, subjects the offender to prosecution. It gives to the government no other interest in or control over the road.

The railroad may be changed at the will of the proprietors, and the mail will not be carried in the cars, except by contract, for which a compensation is paid. The same principle applies to a turnpike road on which the mail is carried. Even an ordinary road, though a post-road, may be altered or vacated at the will of the local authority.

It is difficult to perceive what benefit can result to the public from these bridges being declared a post-road. It cannot use the bridges without paying toll the same as for the use of a turnpike road or railroad. It does not prevent the bridge company from pulling down the bridge or altering it in any [\* 442] respect. They are under no obligation by reason of this use to keep up the bridge or repair it. They may abandon it, and

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if it should be again prostrated by the winds, they are not obliged to rebuild it.

The idea that making the bridge a post-road would exempt it from the consequence of being a nuisance, is wholly unsustainable. Should the contractor to carry the mail refuse or neglect to pay the customary tolls, he would be liable to a suit for the amount. If one of the Pittsburg packets carry the mail under a contract with the post-office department, and the bridge should obstruct the boat, such an obstruction would make the bridge company liable, unless the above act, which gives a preference to the crossing mail, applies a different rule to the mail boat; and it would seem that no such preference can arise under the law declaring the bridge to be a post-road.

But is there a power in congress to legalize a bridge over a navigable water within the jurisdiction of any State or States? It has the power to regulate commerce among the several States, requiring two or more States to authorize the regulation. But this does not necessarily include the power to construct bridges which may obstruct commerce, but can never increase its facilities on a navigable water. Any power which congress may have in regard to such a structure is indirect, and results from a commercial regulation. It may, under this power, declare that no bridge shall be built which shall be an obstruction to the use of a navigable water. And this, it would seem, is as far as the commercial power by congress can be exercised.

The same power that would enable congress to build a bridge over a navigable stream would authorize it to construct a railroad or turnpike road through the States of the Union, as it might deem expedient. This power may have been asserted in regard to post-roads, but the settled opinion now seems to be, that to establish post-roads within the meaning of the constitution is to designate them. In this sense congress may establish post-roads extending over bridges, but it can neither build them nor exercise any control over them, except the mere use for the conveyance of the mail on paying toll.

It has often been held that in throwing a bridge across a navigable river or arm of a lake, or the sea, the sovereign power of the State in some form may authorize it, under such restrictions and conditions as may be considered best for the public. But this power must always be so exercised as not materially to obstruct navigation. Over this public right congress exercises exclusive legislation, except where the constitution restricts it; and the judicial power can never interpose, except in regard to

\* private injuries. It would be otherwise if congress [ \* 443 ] should authorize an indictment for obstructing the public right of navigation on the Ohio, or generally. If, under the commercial power, congress may make bridges over navigable waters, it would be difficult to find any limitation of such a power. Turnpike roads, railroads, and canals might on the same principle be built by congress. And if this be a constitutional power, it cannot be restricted or interfered with by any State regulation. So extravagant and absorbing a federal power as this has rarely, if ever, been claimed by any one. It would, in a great degree, supersede the State governments by the tremendous authority and patronage it would exercise. But if the power be found in the constitution, no principle is perceived by which it can be practically restricted. This dilemma leads us to the conclusion that it is not a constitutional power. Having arrived at this point, it only remains to say, that the act of congress declaring the bridge to be a legal structure, being the exercise of a judicial and an appellate power, is unconstitutional, and consequently inoperative. It is what it purports to be, a reversal of the decree of this court, in effect, if not in terms.

Under the commercial power, congress may declare what shall constitute an obstruction of commerce, on a navigable water; and so far as the public right is concerned, there is no limitation to the exercise of this power, unless it be found in the constitution.

It must be admitted that the provision in the 7th section in regard to the length of the pipes and chimneys of the boats which ply on the Ohio from and to Pittsburg, is a commercial regulation. Congress have required the boilers of steamboats to be inspected, and that an iron chain should be used as a tiller-rope on all steamboats, and this has been required with a view to the safety of the boat, its passengers and cargo. In the event of fire the rope is generally burnt, and the boat becomes unmanageable. This is as far as congress has legislated, in regard to the tackle of the boat. No attempt has before been made to regulate the height of the chimneys.

From facts above stated, it appears the speed of the seven packets, by cutting down the chimney, would be reduced four hours, on an average, each, on a trip between Pittsburg and Cincinnati. This, as the statement shows, would increase the expense of the owners of the seven packets, in addition to the loss of time, \$13,994.40 per annum. Such a regulation would seem to be the more objectionable, as the loss arises from the preference given to the bridge, which the public accommodation does not require.

But there is another objection, of a more serious nature. In



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[ \*444 ] \* the 9th section of the 2d article of the constitution, it is declared "that no preference shall be given, by any regulation of commerce or revenue, to the ports of one State over those of another." This can have no relation to "duties and imposts," as, in the 8th section, it is declared "they shall be uniform throughout the United States." The clause must refer to some other regulation, and it applies, of course, to all regulations affecting commerce.

It was said in the late argument of this case, that the Pittsburg packets had done a larger business in transportation the last year, than within the same time at any former period. If this be so, the injury by cutting down the chimneys of all the boats to and from Pittsburg must amount to a larger sum than above stated. Nothing could more forcibly illustrate the propriety of the above provision in the constitution, that no port in one State shall have a preference over those of another.

Practical knowledge in regard to steamboat and railroad transportation of freight is better than theory. Notwithstanding the lines of railroad from Pittsburg to Cincinnati, and to St. Louis, by the way of Chicago, for the past year have been in operation, the business on the steamboat lines has greatly increased in freight; and from published prices it would seem that the water transportation is three times cheaper than the railroad, and, on account of the frequent detention of freight cars, is much more expeditious.

But it is said many regulations of commerce, from local circumstances, cannot operate equally on all ports. As, for instance, a breakwater may be more beneficial to one port than another; and the same inequality may exist from the establishment of lighthouses and the improvement of harbors. But these are incidental and not direct consequences, resulting from the exercise of the legislative power, and no prudence can, effectually, guard against them. As near as may be, equal facilities should be given to ports of equal importance; this, however, is a matter for the decision of congress, and does not belong to the judiciary. But where a prohibition is imposed on congress in the exercise of the commercial power, and it is not regarded, it is a judicial question, and this is the only check to be relied on against such unconstitutional legislation.

It is objected that the court cannot determine what degree of preference shall be given to one port over another, to make the regulation come within the prohibition. If this be so, then is the constitutional prohibition a dead letter; but this is not the practical view which this court have uniformly taken of the consti-

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tution. The restrictions on State powers stand upon the same footing, and no insuperable difficulty has been found in giving effect to them.

\* “No State shall coin money; emit bills of credit; [\* 445] make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payments of debts; pass any bill of attainder, *ex post facto* law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts.” To determine the unconstitutionality of a law under some of these prohibitions would be attended with as much, if not more, difficulty than to say whether a commercial regulation gives a preference to one port over another.

In the case of *McCulloch v. The State of Maryland*, 4 Wheat. 431, the court say, “that the power to tax ‘the Bank of the United States’ involves the power to destroy,” and on this ground the tax on the bank by the legislature of Maryland was declared to be unconstitutional and void. If this rule be applied to the point under consideration, no doubt could exist. Congress are prohibited from giving a preference to one port over another in different States, and consequently, if any such preference be given, the regulation is void. Not an incidental preference, but a regulation which necessarily acts injuriously and oppressively on one to the exclusion of other ports.

Suppose congress had declared by law that all steamboats plying to and from Pittsburg should not use chimneys more than forty feet high, which would essentially retard their progress, and consequently injure their business, would any court hesitate to pronounce such a regulation unconstitutional, as giving a preference to all other ports on the river over that of Pittsburg? This congress has in effect done, and the only justification for it must be found, if any exist, in the regulated height of the bridge. But the bridge, at a very small expense comparatively, could have been elevated as our decree required, and as the charter under which it was built also required. Less than this: if a draw had been made in the bridge over the western channel, so as to enable boats to pass up and down the river when they could not pass under the suspension bridge, nothing more was required. The expense of the draw, it is believed, would not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars—a sum less, as it would seem, than the annual injury inflicted on the commerce of Pittsburg by the bridge.

If the regulation of the chimneys of steamboats, as in the law to protect the bridge, would be unconstitutional without the bridge, it is not perceived how the bridge could make it constitutional. The right to cross the river by a bridge, and to navigate it, is

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admitted; but these public rights are not incompatible. They can both be enjoyed without any material interference of the one with the other. This being the case, congress, it would seem, cannot restrict the right to navigate the river for the benefit of the [ \* 446 ] bridge. It cannot violate the constitutional inhibition \*in giving a preference to other ports over that of Pittsburg, by declaring the Wheeling bridge formed no obstruction to navigation. The constitution declares congress shall not give a preference to one port over another; the act, if done, is not constitutional, though done under the power to regulate commerce.

The equality which such a regulation was intended to secure is a matter intimately connected with the commercial prosperity of the country. For a wrong thus done by congress there is no remedy, except through the exercise of the judicial power. This court is sworn to support the constitution, and in every infraction of that instrument by congress or State legislatures, where individual injury is inflicted, redress may be obtained by action in court. Congress is prohibited from laying a duty on exports, except for port charges. Can a duty be imposed on exports beyond this under the commercial power? The commercial power is limited in this and in other cases, and if the limit be exceeded the act is void. The federal government in all its forms exercises enumerated and limited powers. But if the limitation depends upon the discretion of congress, there is neither limitation nor protection. This is neither the theory nor the practical operation of the government. Congress has power to regulate commerce, but it has no power in such regulation to give a preference to one port in a State over another port in a different State. If it may do this to an extent materially injurious, it may equally disregard every other restriction in the constitution. The regulation of the height of the chimneys of steamboats which ply to and from Pittsburg, by the present elevation of the bridge, is the same in effect and in principle as if the act had required such steamers to cut down their chimneys without reference to the bridge. The bridge affords no justification or excuse for an unconstitutional regulation.

But it is said there is great difficulty in ascertaining the fact, that a regulation gives a preference to one or more ports in a State over those of another, and it is intimated that a jury should be called to ascertain the fact. This argument was used in regard to the fact of obstruction, complained of by Pennsylvania; but this court very properly determined that a court of chancery, having jurisdiction, could inquire whether the bridge constituted such an obstruction to commerce as materially to injure the public works of

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Pennsylvania, and on such a finding by this court the late decree was entered for the removal of the obstruction.

What fact beyond this is necessary to determine the fact of preference of one port over another? The chimneys of the steamboats which ply to and from Pittsburg are required to be \*cut down, so as to pass under the bridge. By this the [ \* 447 ] rights of the port of Pittsburg are measured by the Wheeling bridge, and that bridge, this court have held, is so material an obstruction to commerce as to be a nuisance to the State of Pennsylvania.

This obstruction or nuisance consists in the necessity, when a boat passes under the bridge, of lowering its chimneys, or cutting them down, so as to pass under it; and if this be a material injury to the commerce of the State of Pennsylvania, or its lines of improvement, how much greater the injury to the port of Pittsburg, from and to which one hundred millions' worth of property is transported annually? Can any one fail to see that the proof of preference to the port of Wheeling, and those below it, is given by the regulation complained of, over the port of Pittsburg, and others above the bridge? The proof of this important fact, as found by the decision of the court already pronounced, is more conclusive to show the preference than to establish the claim of Pennsylvania.

Can it be urged that this preference is limited to a mere entry of the port? Had the Wheeling bridge been constructed over the Ohio river, a short distance below Pittsburg, it would have been far less injurious to that port than it now is; the boats, with their propelling power undiminished, could have approached near to that port, where their cargoes are discharged and received.

It is contended that the commerce across the river required the consideration of congress equally with that which floated upon its surface. There is no ground for such an argument. Some twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars, under the decree, would open a passage in the western channel so as to remove the obstruction. The annual injury to the commerce of the port of Pittsburg by the bridge is believed to exceed that sum.

Had the act of congress required all steamboats which ply upon the Ohio river to cut down their chimneys, so as to pass under the Wheeling bridge, the regulation, being general, however injurious, would not have given a preference to one port over another. It would have been the exercise of the commercial power, within the constitution.

The principle involved in this case is of the deepest interest to the commerce of the West. The Mississippi river and its tributa-

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ries water a country unsurpassed, if equalled, in the world, in extent and fertility. But if the obstruction of the Wheeling bridge may be repeated wherever the crossing public shall think proper to build a bridge, one third of the internal commerce of the Union will be materially obstructed. The injury of such a regulation [ \* 448 ] would be very limited in the Atlantic States, as there the rivers are short, and navigation is generally limited to the ebb and flow of the tide. If the Wheeling bridge be a legal structure, hundreds of bridges on the same principle may be thrown over the Mississippi and its navigable tributaries, to the great and remediless injury of western commerce.

That commerce is rapidly increasing, and at this time it probably amounts to four hundred millions of dollars annually; and if the Father of Waters and his tributaries shall have the same regulation extended to them as is now applied to the Wheeling bridge, it will impose a tax upon western commerce of several hundred thousand dollars annually; and this will be, not for the advancement of commerce over those waters, as it will greatly obstruct it, but to save a few thousand dollars in the structure of each bridge.

In regard to the motion for process of contempt against the bridge company, we must, I think, be governed by matters which appear upon the record. Shortly after the first decree was entered, the defendants made application to congress for relief. The object of the bridge company in making this application, was to counteract and annul the decision of this court. It is not supposed, however, that such was the intention of congress in passing the law. The two sections referred to were moved as an amendment to an act making appropriations for the service of the post-office department, on the 31st of August, 1852, at the close of that session. But little time was afforded for investigation of the important questions involved in the act. This fact is not stated to impair the force and effect of the act, but I think it is fit to be considered on this motion, in regard to the conduct of the bridge company.

The court may properly consider, if they are not bound to do so, that the defendants, in making application to congress, and in procuring the passage of the act, as having acted in good faith. And although the law, if it has been passed in violation of the constitution, cannot be held valid, yet it may save the defendants from the contempt charged. On its face, it gave to the bridge company all that it could desire or ask against the decree of this court. It legalized what the court held to be illegal; and it required all steamboats, running to and from Pittsburg, from any point below Wheeling, to regulate their chimneys so as to pass under the

bridge. It was the exercise of a judicial power without an examination of the principles of law applicable, and without a knowledge of the facts on which the decree was founded. No imputation is cast upon that honorable body, but the fact must be known to every one that the senate and house of representatives, however distinguished for their high ability and legal learning, could not discharge, to the public advantage, the duties of an appellate court.

\* I have no doubt that the learned judge had power to [ \* 449 ] grant the injunction. The 5th section of the act of the 2d of March, 1793, (1 Stats. at Large, 334,) declares "that writs of *ne exeat* and of injunction may be granted by any judge of the supreme court, in cases where they might be granted by the supreme or circuit court." The 14th section of the judiciary act of 1789 declares that "the courts of the United States shall have power to issue writs of *scire facias*, *habeas corpus*, and all other writs not specially provided for by statute, which may be necessary for the exercise of their respective jurisdictions, and agreeable to the principles and usages of law."

Six of my brethren now hold that the act of congress arrested the progress of the court in carrying their decree into effect, and gave the defendants a right to rebuild their bridge. The injunction prohibited them from reconstructing it; can the defendants be punished for contempt, for doing that which the law authorized? This view shows that the injunction ought not to have been granted, as it was against law. And is not this a sufficient excuse or the contempt charged? My view is that the law was unconstitutional and void, and yet I consider it as excusing the defendants' contempt. I cannot punish defendants, by fine or imprisonment, for doing that which the law authorized them to do.

There was no opposition made when the injunction was applied for; and it was granted, as a matter of course, on the face of the bill. Had the act of congress been set up against the allowance of the injunction, the motion, in all probability, would have been referred to the supreme court by the judge.

Having come to the conclusion, for the reasons above stated, that the act of congress is inoperative and void, although it may excuse the contempt, it can afford no excuse for a further refusal to perform the decree. I would, therefore, order that the final decree, heretofore made, be carried into effect according to its true intent, by the first day of October next, and that the defendants pay the costs.



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Mr. Justice GRIER. I concur with the majority of this court, that in cases where this court has original jurisdiction, an interlocutory or preliminary injunction may be awarded, in vacation, by any judge of the court. I differ with the majority in declining to punish a wanton contempt of the process of the court.

I concur with my brother McLean, that congress cannot annul or vacate any decree of this court; that the assumption of such a power is without precedent, and, as a precedent for the future, it is of dangerous example.

[ \* 450 ] \* Mr. Justice WAYNE. I concur with Mr. Justices Nelson, Grier, and Curtis, in thinking that the attachment for contempt should have been granted by this court.

I concur with the majority of the court in the view taken by them of the liability of the defendants for the costs of this suit.

I dissent from the majority of the court in the opinion given, that the 6th and 7th sections of the act of the 31st August, 1852, (10 Stats. at Large, 112,) relieve the defendants from the operation of the judgment of this court in behalf of the plaintiff. That judgment was for the abatement of a nuisance of which the plaintiff complained. This court decided it was a nuisance, causing injury and great pecuniary loss, inasmuch as it prevented the State of Pennsylvania from navigating the Ohio river at all stages of its waters, to the uninterrupted navigation of which they had a right under the constitution of the United States. I know of no power in congress to interfere with such a judgment, under the pretense of a power to legalize the structure of bridges over the public navigable rivers of the United States, either within the States, or dividing States from each other, or under the commercial power of congress to regulate commerce among the States.. Nor does the power of congress to establish post-offices and post-roads give any power to congress to do more between the States, or within the States, than to declare the routes for carrying the mails upon roads already existing, and to designate the localities upon those roads where post-offices shall be kept for the delivery and transmission of letters, and other things or parcels which congress may declare to be mailable. Whatever congress may have intended by the act of August, 1852, I do not think it admits of the interpretation given to it by the majority of the court; and if it does, then my opinion is that the act would be unconstitutional.

I concur with many of the views taken by Mr. Justice McLean in his dissenting opinion; but I shall take another opportunity

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to express my opinion fully upon the action of this court and of congress in this case.

Mr. Justice DANIEL. In the decision of the court dissolving the injunction and refusing the coercive measures asked for in this case, I entirely concur. But as, in the argument by which the court have proceeded to their conclusions, important questions of constitutional law appear to me to have been, some of them, passed over without consideration, and others inaccurately expounded, convictions of duty impel me to express my own interpretation of those questions. The correctness or incorrectness of that \*interpretation is left to the judgment of those whom [ \*451 ] curiosity or interest may incline to its examination; but whether examined, or approved, or condemned, or otherwise, it has been given because commanded by a sense of obligation, from obedience to which I hold that no one is or can be absolved.

When the controversy now revived before us was, in January, 1850, for the first time brought to our attention, there suggested themselves to my mind serious difficulties with respect both to the authority and the mode by which it was attempted to place that controversy within the cognizance of this tribunal.

I was unable to perceive by what warrant a judge of a circuit court, circumscribed in his jurisdiction both as to parties and to subjects-matter of litigation within specified limits, could claim cognizance as to parties and subjects-matter confessedly beyond the prescribed bounds of his jurisdiction. Still less could I comprehend by what warrant a circuit judge could, by an interlocutory order at chambers, relative to rights of person and property beyond the bounds of his jurisdiction, transfer a controversy affecting subjects thus situated to the supreme court of the United States.

An attempt to avoid these difficulties (for they were not directly met) was essayed, by the assumption that the application to the circuit court might be adopted here, as the commencement of an original suit by the State of Pennsylvania, that State possessing the right to institute an action in the supreme court, under the provision in the constitution which defines the original jurisdiction of that court. Accordingly, this case was received and treated as one authorized by the constitution, in virtue of the original jurisdiction vested exclusively in the supreme court—a jurisdiction which an inferior court, or a judge of an inferior court, could have no power to exert.

However irregular and unauthorized the first proceedings in this case appeared to me, the granting of the second injunction, and the

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measure directed for enforcing it, I am constrained to regard as still more irregular—a much wider departure from precedent or legitimate authority.

This second proceeding brings to our notice the following state of facts: An application to a circuit judge at chambers, to control by compulsory process persons and property, both of them situated beyond and without the bounds of his legitimate power. This application is granted at chambers, and not by a proceeding in court at all; and the order of the judge so made, and the mandate directed by him singly for the execution of his order, are entitled as a proceeding in and before the supreme court, and as an act of the supreme court; and the peculiar and appropriate officer of this tribunal is ordered to carry that mandate into effect.

[ \* 452 ] \* According to my interpretation of the constitution of the United States, the supreme court is a distinct, aggregate, collective body—one which can act collectively, and in term or in united session only. It cannot delegate its functions, nor can it impose its duties upon any number of the body less than a quorum, constituted of a majority of its members. Much less can a single judge be clothed with its joint powers, to be wielded by him at any time or in any place, or to any extent to which his individual discretion may point. Yet, in the case before us, we have a proceeding begun, prosecuted, and consummated in the name of the supreme court—nay, denominated their proper act when eight of the nine judges constituting this tribunal had no participation in that proceeding, perhaps never even suspected its existence. It may very well be inquired whether a majority of the judges, either acting individually or collectively in court, would, on principles of power or of justice, have sanctioned the course pursued in this case? For one, I can answer that by him it would have been unhesitatingly rejected.

Yet this course is now attempted to justify and sustain, under the 5th section of the act of congress of the 2d of March, 1793, (1 Stats. at Large, 334,) which provides that “writs of *ne exeat* and injunction may be granted by any judge of the supreme court in cases where they might be granted by the supreme court or a circuit court.”

The inference sought to be drawn from the provision just cited, I propose cursorily to examine, with the view of showing its incorrectness as a deduction from the language or the purposes of that provision, and especially with the view of exposing the total inapplicability of the attempted conclusion to the facts developed by the record before us.

The subjects embraced within the proposed inquiry, namely, the

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distribution and exercise of power in the different divisions of the federal judiciary—the definition and establishment of the distinctive boundaries within which those several divisions should revolve, are matters of an importance much too grave to be incidentally or lightly disposed of. They are matters inseparable alike from the order and harmony and stability of public authority, and from the safety and enjoyment of private right.

By the act of congress establishing the judicial courts of the United States, (1 Stats. at Large, 81,) no power was conferred upon the judges of the courts of the United States to grant writs of injunction; nor was the power to grant an injunction *eo nomine* conferred upon any of the courts. This authority was, however, as to the courts, given by implication in the 14th section of the statute, which authorized the courts therein before enumerated, to grant writs of *scire facias*, *habeas corpus*, and \*all other writs [\* 453] not specially provided for by statute, which may be necessary for the exercise of their respective jurisdictions.

The feature of this provision proper for consideration here is this: that the power was conferred upon the courts, and not upon the judges, and was given in cases only in which it was necessary for the exercise of the jurisdiction of those courts. What was the jurisdiction of the circuit courts, as to persons or property, or both? With respect to proceedings *in rem*, as the process of the court could not run beyond the prescribed limits of its appropriate district, the jurisdiction or power of the court could be co-extensive only with those limits, and was, consequently, impotent and null as to any direct control of the subject-matter when situated beyond them. And with respect to the jurisdiction over persons or parties, we find it declared by the 11th section of the judiciary act, that “no civil suit shall be brought before either of the said courts, against an inhabitant of the United States, in any other district than that whereof he is an inhabitant, or in which he shall be found at the time of serving the writ;” and so careful have been the authors of this restriction to insure its effectual observance, that in the same section of the statute they have prohibited every transfer of the interests or rights of parties made with the view of evading its operation. An interpretation of the 11th section of the judiciary act—one conclusive upon the jurisdiction of the circuit courts—has been declared in repeated decisions by this court, as may be seen among other instances which might be adduced, in the cases of *McMicken v. Webb*, 11 Pet. 36; of *Toland v. Sprague*, 12 Pet. p. 300; and of *Keary v. The Farmers’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Memphis*, 16 Pet. p. 89. In the second of the cases just cited, the effect of the statute

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in defining the jurisdiction of the circuit courts is examined with much minuteness and particularity.

It follows, then, by necessary induction, both from the language of the judiciary act and from the interpretation thereof by this court, that the jurisdiction—as auxiliary to which, and as a means of enforcing its exercise, the power to grant injunctions was conferred upon the circuit courts—is that jurisdiction restricted to persons and property found within the prescribed local bounds assigned to those courts.

But it has been argued, that whilst the restrictions above mentioned may be imposed upon the courts as such, in the most solemn and deliberate exercise of their functions, the judges individually, out of court, and distinguished as they are by the language of the law from the courts, have been released from the same or similar restraints, and have been clothed with power separately to [ \* 454 ] exert this extraordinary jurisdiction over persons \* and property residing or situated anywhere and everywhere within the United States. Nothing more is required, according to this argument, to overstep the fixed and designated boundary of the courts' authority than the *sic jubeo* of the individual judge.

In considering the interpretation now placed upon the 5th section of the act of March 2, 1793, the mind is impressed with the irregularity and inconsistency which this interpretation implies; and with the inutility and inefficiency for any beneficial object, of the power it is said to have created. It is certainly a novelty, and an anomaly in jurisprudence, to allege in a judicial officer acting out of court, and as it were *in pais*, the existence of a jurisdiction over persons and property with respect to which he has no power to adjudicate in court, and his acts in relation to which he possesses no authority to reverse or modify or even to revise. Yet this is precisely the attitude which the circuit courts and the judges of those courts are made to occupy in relation to each other, by the interpretation now attempted.

In the next place, so far as usefulness or efficiency may be supposed to have been the objects of the statute, much of these are taken away by denying to the courts the power claimed for the judges out of court to act upon persons or property beyond the bounds of the respective circuits. The same necessity which would dictate a resort to one, requiring equally a resort to both or either.

Some obscurity and difficulty is perceived and felt as arising from that portion of § 5 of the act of March 2, 1793, which permits the judges of the circuit courts to grant injunctions in cases wherein

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they might be granted by the supreme court; but this language it is thought, when correctly understood, operates no change, or extension, or enlargement of the powers and jurisdiction of the circuit courts, or of the judges of those courts. If indeed it should be contended that this section of the statute was designed to confer, or by its terms purported to confer upon the circuit courts, or upon the judges thereof, the jurisdiction and functions of the supreme court, then must that section, so far at least, be rejected as absolutely void, being in violation of the constitution.

The supreme court of the United States is the creature of the constitution. By this instrument its powers and jurisdiction, original and appellate, are conferred and defined; these are peculiar and exclusive, and by no legislation can they be enlarged or diminished, much less can they, either in whole or in part, be delegated to other tribunals or officers of any grade or description.

I am clearly of the opinion therefore, that by the 5th section \*of the act of 1793, no power to exercise authority [ \* 455 ] or jurisdiction appertaining to the supreme court was, or could have been, conferred either upon the circuit courts or upon the judges thereof; but that this section must be understood as simply conferring upon the judges a power previously confined to the courts alone—namely, the power to grant injunctions, and this subject to every limitation by which the circuit courts were controlled.

But the interpretation of the act of 1793 now contended for, broad as it is, still is not wide enough to cover the proceeding which it is now used to shield and protect. To accomplish this end, it must be stretched still more; and until it can be made to comprise an identification of a single judge of the supreme court with the entire court itself, and the transformation of an act by an individual judge—an act performed without the accustomed formalities of a regular court—into a proceeding by the supreme court in the exercise of its constitutional and only legitimate functions.

The order granting the second injunction in this case, were it obnoxious to no other objection, appears to me to be unwarranted and void, for the reason that it assumes to contravene and overrule in effect, if not in terms, an existing decree of this court, between these same parties and upon the same subject-matter.

The decree of this court, first pronounced in February, 1852, decided that the suspension bridge at Wheeling was an obstruction to the passage of steamboats on the Ohio river, and that unless it should be elevated to the height of one hundred and eleven feet above low-water mark, before the 1st day of February next follow-



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ing this decree, it should be abated. Upon a subsequent day of the same term, the decree was so modified as to substitute for the requirement of increased elevation, or of the alternative of an abatement, permission to the proprietors of the suspension bridge to construct in the permanent wooden bridge, which spans the western channel of the river, a draw of a capacity sufficient for the passage of steamboats of the largest class; the additional distance or the short delay (of a few minutes only) incident to this arrangement constituting, as expressed in the language of this court, "no appreciable injury to commerce." Liberty was reserved by this decree to either party to "move the court in relation to this matter on the 1st Monday of February ensuing." *Vide* 13 How. 625.

In obedience to a notice from the complainant, under the liberty reserved in the decree, the defendants appeared on the regular return day by counsel in court; but the complainant failing to prosecute this motion, it was permitted to be discontinued. To a second notice to the defendants they again appeared, but [ \* 456 ] \*the complainant again making default, was formally called, and the motion was dismissed.

From this failure or refusal on the part of those who were authorized to move in the case, this court, for aught that could be judicially known to them, might have been justified in the conclusion, that everything they had ordered had been complied with, or had been arranged to the mutual satisfaction of the parties. Certainly up to this period, there was no fact regularly and formally before them, on which to found or justify process for contempt. Under this state of things, the suspension bridge at Wheeling remained, and was authorized to remain.

This court had prescribed the conditions, according to which it was to stand or to be abated, and had designated the parties by whom, the modes by which, and the extent to which, the decree might be carried into effect.

In this attitude of the case, a mandate is issued from a judge at chambers, superseding the mode pointed out by this court for the execution of its decree, and wholly irrespective of any condition according to which that decree had been, by its own terms, modified, as above mentioned.

The above mandate assumes to order, in the name of this court, that no bridge of an elevation less than that prescribed by this order, shall be thrown across the Ohio from Zane's Island to Wheeling, regardless altogether of any facility, however complete, which might be provided for the passage of steamboats by the western channel of the river.

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This mandate, therefore, was itself a palpable violation of the decree of this court, and of rights reserved to the defendants by that decree—rights which they twice evinced their readiness to vindicate before this court, in opposition to the reiterated, but subsequently abandoned attempts by the complainant to assail them.

Can contempt, then, be affirmed or imputed with reference to a readiness to yield obedience to the regular authority of the court, or with reference to an unwillingness to comply with a proceeding not merely void in itself, but one also in manifest violation of the constitution and the law?

To which, it may be asked, were the defendants bound to conform, to the authority of this court, deliberately announced upon a question regularly before them as a court, or to an order from a single judge, obviously in contravention of the former, assuming to exercise an authority belonging only to the court as an aggregate body, and by which assumption this court is placed in an attitude adversary to its own decree?

There is still another view of this case, which, to my mind, is conclusive against the proceedings on the part of the circuit \*judge, and equally so against every motion now [ \* 457 ] urged before us as founded thereon, or on either the principal or modified decree heretofore pronounced in this cause.

Previously to the application for the second injunction, the congress of the United States, by a formal statutory enactment, declared the bridges which had been erected over the Ohio at Wheeling in Virginia, and at Bridgeport in the State of Ohio, abutting on Zane's Island, to be lawful structures in their present position and elevation, "anything in any law or laws of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding." And they further enacted, "that the officers and crews of all vessels and boats navigating the said river, are required to regulate the use of their said vessels and boats, and any pipes, or chimney, or chimneys belonging thereto, so as not to interfere with the elevation and structure of the said bridges." *Vide* 10 Stats. at Large, 112.

Against the effect of these very explicit enactments, it has been contended that they are void, because, as it is said, they reverse a decision of this court, which congress has no power to do. In answer to this argument, it may be conceded that the position assumed by it might be true with reference to the adjustment or security of private rights vested under previously existing laws or adjudications; but such a position is wholly inapplicable to measures of public policy falling appropriately within the legislative competency, and much less can it have any influence to warrant in

any other department of the government the exercise of powers vested exclusively in the national legislature.

It is impossible to read either the original or the modified decree, by the majority of the court in this cause, without perceiving that both these decrees, as well as the entire argument in support of them, were based upon the single assumption that the erection of the suspension bridge at Wheeling was an interference with the right to regulate commerce vested in congress by the constitution. It is equally manifest, from the arguments and opinions of the minority of the court, that the right in congress to regulate commerce is not only conceded by the minority, but the exclusiveness of that power in congress is insisted upon. These later opinions maintain the doctrine that congress alone are competent to exercise this right or power, and can neither be controlled nor anticipated with respect to it by the judicial department, upon any fancied necessity, nor upon any supposed neglect, or omission, or incompetency, which the latter may impute to congress, and may imagine the judicial department called upon to remedy.

In these views are seen essentially, nay explicitly, the [ \* 458 ] diversity \* existing in the opinions of the majority and minority of the judges, as declared in this case.

Congress have, by statute already referred to, undertaken to regulate the commerce upon the Ohio river, so far as the matters involved in this controversy are concerned. And who shall question their power to do this? Does it belong to this court, under any article or clause of the constitution, or of any statute, to assume such a superiority? Congress have ordained that the vehicles of commerce on the Ohio, the steamboats, shall so graduate the height of their chimneys, as not to interfere with the bridges at Wheeling, as existing at the date of the statute. By this they have at least declared that these bridges are deemed by them no invasion either of the power or the policy of congress with reference to the commerce of the Ohio river. They have regulated this matter upon a scale by them conceived to be just and impartial, with reference to that commerce which pursues the course of the river, and to that which traverses its channel, and is broadly diffused through the country.

They have at the same time by what they have done, secured to the government, and to the public at large, the essential advantage of a safe and certain transit over the Ohio—an advantage which, previously to the erection of the Wheeling bridge, was greatly desired but never attained.

In what has been done by congress, I can have no doubt that

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they have acted wisely, justly, and strictly within their constitutional competency. By their action they have completely overthrown every foundation upon which the decrees of this court, the orders of the circuit judge, and every motion purporting to be based upon these or either of them, could rest. I am, therefore, of the opinion that each and every motion submitted by the complainant under color of the decrees heretofore pronounced in this cause, or of the injunction awarded by the judge of the circuit court, should be overruled; that the injunction awarded as aforesaid should be dissolved, and the bill praying for that injunction should be dismissed; and that in each instance the defendants should be decreed their costs.

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STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA v. THE WHEELING AND BELMONT BRIDGE COMPANY.

18 H. 460.

POWER OF THIS COURT AS TO COSTS.

1. This court has, in cases of original jurisdiction, the inherent power which belongs to all courts to award costs to the proper party, and render a judgment for them without the aid of a special act of congress.
2. There are numerous acts of congress recognizing this power in all the courts of the United States, including this court.
3. Where the question of costs had been referred to the clerk, with directions to examine a witness, and his report, after being duly filed, was examined and confirmed by order of the court, without exception or objection, this court will not grant a petition for a re-examination of that subject by bill of review or otherwise.

THIS was a sequel to the preceding case, and came up on a motion by counsel for the bridge company for leave to file a bill of review of the order of this court made at the December term, 1851, in regard to the costs between the parties.

*Mr. Russell*, for the company.

Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an application made on the part of the defendants for leave to file a bill of review, so far as respects the orders and decrees for costs heretofore rendered in the above case against them.

The court have already determined that the decree rendered for costs against the defendants was unaffected by the act of congress passed August 31, 1852, and with which determination it is entirely satisfied.

any other department of the government the exercise of powers vested exclusively in the national legislature.

It is impossible to read either the original or the modified decree, by the majority of the court in this cause, without perceiving that both these decrees, as well as the entire argument in support of them, were based upon the single assumption that the erection of the suspension bridge at Wheeling was an interference with the right to regulate commerce vested in congress by the constitution. It is equally manifest, from the arguments and opinions of the minority of the court, that the right in congress to regulate commerce is not only conceded by the minority, but the exclusiveness of that power in congress is insisted upon. These later opinions maintain the doctrine that congress alone are competent to exercise this right or power, and can neither be controlled nor anticipated with respect to it by the judicial department, upon any fancied necessity, nor upon any supposed neglect, or omission, or incompetency, which the latter may impute to congress, and may imagine the judicial department called upon to remedy.

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*Mr. Russell*, for the company.

Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an application made on the part of the defendants for leave to file a bill of review, so far as respects the orders and decrees for costs heretofore rendered in the above case against them.

The court have already determined that the decree rendered for costs against the defendants was unaffected by the act of congress passed August 31, 1852, and with which determination it is entirely satisfied.



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The Magnolia.

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with directions to examine witnesses, and resort to such other proofs for the purpose of ascertaining the proper compensation to be allowed the commissioners, and to the engineers and clerks employed by him, and also to ascertain the whole amount of expenses incurred by said commissioner, and the amount advanced by the respective parties, and report on the same; and that either party have leave to except to the report, in writing, as to any of the items or sums of money allowed by the clerk.

[ \* 463 ] \* This report was duly made in conformity with the order, and the counsel for the respective parties filed at the time a written declaration waiving all exceptions to any part of said account or vouchers, and stating that they do not mean to except to said report, nor desire any further time to examine or except to it; whereupon the report was confirmed by this court.

It can hardly be expected, after this deliberate proceeding by the court to ascertain the costs and expenses attending the trial and hearing of the case, and the opportunity of the counsel for the respective parties at the time, to scrutinize the several items of the account, their attendance before the master, and, after the proper scrutiny, entering into and filing an express written waiver of exceptions to the taxation and solemn recognition of its justice and propriety, that the court will open the question for a re-examination, or can desire any further inquiry into or review of the matter thus disposed of. There must be an end of litigation. We are not only satisfied that the party applicant for a review of the question has already had full opportunity to present his objections to the bill of costs, and, indeed, has already availed himself of the benefit of it, but are also satisfied with the order and judgment of the court heretofore given in the premises.

The motion for bill of review, and also for retaxation of costs, is denied.

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THE MAGNOLIA.

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GOSLEE and others, Appellants, v. THEODORE SHUTE and others, Appellees.

18 H. 463.

ADMIRALTY—COLLISION ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

1. The rule for vessels passing each other on the Mississippi river, as shown by the evidence, is for the descending boat to keep near the middle of the river, and the ascending boat near the right bank.
2. A vessel which suffers by a collision due to the violation of this rule is in default, and her owners cannot recover.

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3. A want of a sufficient watch, and an unjustifiable rate of speed in crossing the track of the other vessel, are additional faults.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana.

This was an admiralty case, in which the district court held both vessels to be in fault for a collision, and divided the damages. On appeal, the circuit court was of opinion that the libellants, the owner of *The Autocrat*; were alone in fault, and dismissed the libel. From this decree the libellants took the present appeal.

The facts in regard to the collision are fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Sargent, Mr. Crittenden, and Mr. Pike*, for appellants.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 464 ]

This is an appeal in admiralty, from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana.

The libellant charges, that on a trip from New Orleans to Memphis in the steamer *Autocrat*, with a full cargo, and a great number of passengers, *The Magnolia* ran into her, forward of the wheel on her larboard side, which caused her to sink in less than ten minutes; by which the boat and cargo were lost, and the lives of several passengers.

On the hearing in the district court, it was held that both boats were in fault; and, under the well-established rule of the admiralty, the damage was divided. From that decision an appeal was taken to the circuit court, which reversed the decree of the district court. The appeal now before us is from the circuit court.

As usual, in collision cases, there is some conflict among the witnesses in regard to the facts of the case, as well as to matters of opinion.

On the 9th of February, 1852, the steamboat *Magnolia*, descending the Mississippi river, one hundred miles above New Orleans, about five o'clock in the morning, landed to wood, on the left bank of the river, at a place called Col. Robinson's wood-yard. Before the boat left the wood-yard, when the pilot was on deck and about to take the helm, his attention was called to an ascending boat, which was near Bayou Goula, a mile and a half or two miles below. When first seen, the ascending boat was running to the right bank of the river.

There is a bar on the left side of the river about a mile below

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The Magnolia.

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the wood-yard. The course of ascending boats is to cross into the bend, just above Bayou Goula, and keep up the right shore some six or seven miles. This course was taken by The Autocrat, averaging, generally, less than one hundred yards from the right shore.

On leaving the wood-yard, The Magnolia backed out on both wheels, her bow being fast on the shore; as she came off both engines were stopped, and then the boat went ahead on both wheels to check her up. As soon as this was done, her stern being opposite the wood-yard, the larboard engine was stopped, [ \* 465 ] \* to let her come round by the action of the starboard wheel. The Autocrat continued up the right bank until she came opposite, or nearly opposite, to Col. Butler's residence. At this place she was within less than one hundred yards of the shore, when she changed her course to the left shore, nearly in the direction of the wood-yard which had a few minutes before been left by The Magnolia. The river at this place is about three quarters of a mile wide.

In rounding, The Magnolia passed the middle of the river, but as her bow was thrown down the stream, The Autocrat, turning suddenly to the right, approached her with a speed of some ten or twelve miles an hour. As The Autocrat approached, by a tap of the bell she signified her intention to cross to the left bank, and before the bow of The Magnolia, whose bell was rung two taps, indicating the same direction. Seeing the imminent danger, The Magnolia rang her bells to back; and it is stated by her pilot, that when the collision happened she lay upon the water, not having a descending movement of more than at the rate of a mile or a mile and a half to the hour. The Autocrat struck her with so much force as to turn her bow up the stream. In less than ten minutes The Autocrat sunk in deep water. It was not more than five minutes after The Magnolia left the wood-yard, until the collision occurred. The pilot says The Magnolia was brought round, as soon as could be done, by the action of her starboard wheel.

The nose of The Magnolia struck The Autocrat's guard near the forward part of the cylinder, on the larboard side, and the hull, at the other end of the cylinder, and brought up in her wheel. The collision took place not far from the middle of the river, somewhat nearer to the right bank than to the left. After the boats were separated, the machinery of The Autocrat continued to work for a few minutes, her course being directed to the right bank, on reaching which, she went down.

Entire accuracy of witnesses as to the direction and position of the boats in a case of collision at night, is not to be expected.

The peril is too great and absorbing to note and detail the events as they transpired, by the officers and hands of either boat. The leading facts being ascertained by the weight of the testimony, when properly considered, will lead to a more just result than by a minute examination of the evidence.

What was the duty of the respective boats, when they first came within view of each other? The Magnolia was at the wood-yard on the left bank of the river; The Autocrat was near Bayou Goula, crossing over to the right bank of the river, about a mile and a half below the wood-yard.

Although there is some contrariety of evidence in regard to \* the usage which should govern the respective boats, [ \* 466 ] occupying the positions above stated, yet the weight of the evidence clearly establishes the rule, that the ascending boat should keep near the right bank and the descending one about in the middle of the river. Each boat was bound to keep a vigilant and competent watch, and to slacken the speed of the boat and stop it, as the danger becomes imminent. This is dictated by a common prudence of a qualified pilot.

The principal fact relied on to show fault in The Magnolia is, that she left the wood-yard, and described too large a circle in rounding; that the larboard wheel should have made backwater, which would have reduced the circle and have thrown the bow down the stream in less time.

After a misfortune has happened, it is easy to see how it might have been avoided. If The Magnolia had remained at the wood-yard some eight or ten minutes longer, there could have been no collision. But this is not a fair mode of trying the case. Had the officers of The Magnolia a right to expect that The Autocrat would not depart from her course; and if she had not done so, could the boats have come in contact? It is clear, if the ascending boat had continued near the right bank of the river, there would have been no collision. This is an important fact. Admit that The Magnolia passed the middle of the stream in rounding, still ample space was left for the ascending boat. One third or even one fourth of the river, the water being deep, was sufficient for this purpose. The testimony shows that at least one third of the river, along the right bank, was open for The Autocrat.

But it is said that the pilot of The Autocrat, seeing The Magnolia was rounding off from the wood-yard, had a right to conclude that it intended to cross over to the right bank. This was a little after five o'clock in the morning; daylight was breaking, but the stars had not disappeared.

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The Magnolia.

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Being acquainted with the locality of the wood-yard, and the general course of the river, the pilot of The Autocrat must be presumed to know that a large boat could not round in a narrow circle. His inference would naturally be, that the boat was rounding from the wood-yard, and not to cross the stream. But admit that the direction of The Magnolia was doubtful—it was the duty of the officers of The Autocrat to slacken her speed, and even to stop her engines, until those doubts were removed. No such precautions were used. The Autocrat, by a great pressure of steam, was propelled onward, changing her course; and in attempting to pass the bow of The Magnolia, came in contact with her. Her pilot had hoped, it seems, to pass her stern; but to any prudent man, either attempt would have been considered [ \* 467 ] \*a dangerous experiment. His great error, however, consisted in leaving the way established by usage; such to him would have been the way of safety. Every deviation from it, in meeting a boat, is always hazardous, and often fatal.

There was another defect, in not having an efficient watch on The Autocrat. This is indispensable, especially in navigating our western rivers. The captain was asleep; the watchman did not occupy the proper position; there, in fact, was no watch to direct or advise the pilot; he seems to have been left to the exercise of his own judgment, unaided by suggestions or facts from any quarter. This is enough to charge The Autocrat with fault.

Leaving the wood-yard by The Magnolia, under the circumstances, was not charged as a fault in the libel, nor was it so stated in the protest. The Magnolia had an efficient watch at the proper place for observation, and an experienced pilot. She rounded in the ordinary way. While the pilot of The Autocrat was a mile from The Magnolia, he ascertained that she was a descending boat. Still under the impression that she intended to run down the right bank, the course of The Autocrat was so changed across the river, in the direction of the wood-yard, as to bring the boats in conflict. Had the pilot of The Autocrat designed to produce a collision, he could not have taken a different course from the one he did take. From intimidation, or some other cause, he showed a culpable defect of judgment, and a disregard of the established usage.

The Magnolia seems to have taken every precaution she was required to take to avoid the collision. She was in her proper place, near the middle of the river, moving down the stream with less force than the current. If The Autocrat had met the crisis

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with the same precaution, a collision could have caused little or no damage.

The decree of the circuit court is affirmed.

Mr. Chief Justice TANEY, Mr. Justice WAYNE, and Mr. Justice DANIEL dissented.

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RICHARD D. WOOD and others, Appellants, v. ALEXANDER C. DAVIS.  
18 H. 467.

REMOVAL OF CASES FROM STATE COURTS—APPEAL FROM ORDER REMANDING IT.

1. A case removed from a State court to the circuit court of the United States should not be remanded because some of the mere nominal parties are citizens of the same State with plaintiffs.
2. Persons holding possession of notes which are the subject of controversy, as mere agents of the party seeking the removal, and without interest in the notes, and attorneys employed to collect the notes, are such nominal parties; and the case should not be remanded because they are made co-defendants.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the northern district of Illinois.  
The case is stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. St. George T. Campbell and Mr. Browning*, for appellants.

*Mr. Carlisle*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 468 ]

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the northern district of Illinois.

Davis, a citizen resident of Illinois, filed a bill in the 14th judicial circuit of that State, in chancery, against the appellants, citizens and residents of Pennsylvania, and four other persons who will be more particularly noticed hereafter, setting out various dealings and business transactions between the complainant and the appellants, under the firm of Wood, Abbott, and Co., from the year 1843 down to the year 1849. That in October of the latter year, the firm, claiming to be largely in advance to the complainant, sent one of the partners to his place of business for the purpose of procuring a settlement of the accounts, and security for the balance of indebtedness. The balance was ascertained to be some \$29,000, the payment of which was eventually secured by the conveyance of certain parcels of real estate; the firm, at the same time, entering into an agreement to resell and reconvey the same for the amount of the debt and interest, in one, two, three, and four years. The complainant also gave his notes for the amount



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for the purchase-money. All the notes have been paid, and parcels of the land reconveyed from time to time, except the last note of \$6,000, and the parcels of land retained as security for its payment.

This note having become due, the firm of Wood, Abbott, and Co., the appellants, transmitted it and a deed of the land to Foster and Stohl, with directions to collect the money, and on receipt of the same to deliver the deed to the complainant. The note having been presented for payment, it was refused, upon which they placed

it in the hands of Hooper and Campbell, attorneys at law, [ \* 469 ] for collection. The bill in this case was filed \* against

Wood, Abbott, and Co., the appellants, Stohl and Foster, the agents, and Hooper and Campbell, the attorneys, setting out the facts substantially as above stated, together with the additional charges that the account presented by the firm of Wood, Abbott, and Co., was overcharged and fraudulently made up, and that a much less balance was due to them than the amount secured upon a fair and equitable adjustment. The bill avers that Stohl and Foster had no interest in the transaction, except to receive the money on the note, and to deliver the deed as agents of Wood, Abbott, and Co.; and that Hooper and Campbell have no interest, except as attorneys for the collection of the note. There is a prayer for subpœna against all the defendants, and for answers; also that an account be taken between the complainant and Wood, Abbott, and Co.; and the note be given up, and the deed be delivered to complainant; that an injunction be issued enjoining Stohl and Foster, and Hooper and Campbell, from delivering over the note to the appellants.

The firm of Wood, Abbott, and Co. entered their appearance at November term, 1853, and petitioned the court, under the 12th section of the judiciary act, for a removal of the cause to the circuit court of the United States, on the ground that they were citizens and residents of the State of Pennsylvania, which application was granted.

The appellants, afterwards, in April, 1854, filed an answer to the bill in the circuit court of the United States; and on the 29th of June, 1855, that court ordered the cause to be remanded back to the State court from which it was sent.

The case is now here on an appeal from that order.

The ground upon which the cause was remanded is, that four of the defendants were citizens of the State of Illinois—namely, Stohl and Foster, and Hooper and Campbell—the same State of which the complainant was a citizen. And this presents the question

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whether or not these defendants were parties in interest in the subject of litigation, or, in other words, were proper or necessary parties in the suit. It has been repeatedly decided by this court, that formal parties, or nominal parties, or parties without interest, united with the real parties to the litigation, cannot oust the federal courts of jurisdiction, if the citizenship, or character of the real parties, be such as to confer it within the 11th section of the judiciary act. 7 Cranch, 98; 3 Ib. 267; 8 Wheat. 421; 5 Cranch, 303.

It would be difficult to state a case of parties more destitute of interest, or in which they were used merely as formal parties, than in the case of these defendants. Stohl and Foster were simply agents of Wood, Abbott, and Co., with special instructions in which the complainant had no participation, and which could  
\* be recalled at any time before carried into execution; [ \* 470 ]  
and, until carried into execution, the complainant certainly could set up no right under them, much less a right in disregard and defiance of them. Even if the State court had gone on and decreed against these defendants, and compelled a surrender of the note, or a delivery of the deed in the absence of the principals, it could not have extinguished the note, or have transferred the title to the land, as the decree could have had no binding effect upon them. Before the surrender could extinguish the note, or the delivery could have the effect to pass the estate in the land, the decree must operate upon the principals, the real parties in interest, and coerce them to make such surrender or delivery. The agents had no authority to represent them in the litigation. Nor had they any interest of their own in the subject in controversy. This is not the case of a stakeholder, or holder of a deed as an escrow, where the trust has been created by the parties which is sought to be enforced by one of them. In all such cases the trustee may be a proper party, as he has a duty to perform, and which the court may enforce if improperly neglected or refused.

The above view applies with equal if not greater force to the case of the attorneys.

Even if there could be any doubt about the correctness of the view above taken, after the real parties in interest appeared and took upon themselves the defense, the defendants, Stohl and Foster, and Hooper and Campbell, were no longer parties in interest, or necessary parties, as the possession of the note and of the deed by the agents and the attorneys, was, in judgment of law, the possession of the principals and clients, and any decree or injunction against them would bind the agents or attorneys. 6 Ves. 143; 1

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Fouvergne v. The City of New Orleans.

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Mer. 123; 1 Daniel's Pr. 343; 7 Hare, 428; Story Eq. Pl. §§ 229, 231, 232.

We are satisfied that the decision of the court below was erroneous, and that the order remanding the cause to the State court must be reversed, and the cause restored to its place in the circuit court of the United States.

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EUPHROSINE FOUVERGNE and others, Appellants, v. MUNICIPALITY  
No. 2, OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS  
18 H. 470.

EFFECT GIVEN TO PROBATE OF A WILL BY THIS COURT.

1. The courts of the United States, having no probate jurisdiction, act upon the sentences and decrees of the State courts on such subjects as valid judgments.
2. Where a will in New Orleans was admitted to probate by the only tribunal possessing jurisdiction in 1792, and the property was distributed and held under it without dispute for over fifty years, and no proof is given to assail it for fraud or collusion, it must be held conclusive, both as to the validity of the probate in law and its fairness on the facts.

THE case comes here by appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Taylor* and *Mr. Lewis*, for appellants.

*Mr. Janin*, for appellees.

[ \* 471 ] \* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

The plaintiff filed her bill in chancery to recover a share of the succession of Marie Josepha Deslondes, (wife of Bertrand Gravier,) who died at New Orleans, in November, 1792, without lineal heirs, she claiming to be one of the heirs at law of said decedent. After the death of his wife, Bertrand Gravier placed a petition before the first alcalde of New Orleans, stating that his wife had made a will before a notary and three assisting witnesses; that the testamentary dispositions, as set down, conformed to her instructions, and were given while she was of a sound mind, but she had lost her consciousness before she had signed the paper; and prayed that the assisting witnesses might be examined to prove the will, and that the same might be declared valid in all its parts, in the same manner as if she had signed it. An order was made by the alcalde on this petition, with the approbation of the assessor of the intendancy, and the sanction of the governor and intendant general, directing the notary to take the examination,

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Fouvergne v. The City of New Orleans.

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of the witnesses, as the petitioner had solicited. The witnesses, on their examination, testified that the notary had drawn the will in accordance with the directions of the testatrix, and they were given when her mind and memory were sound ; but that before the formal writing was finished she had lost her consciousness, and did not therefore \*sign the same. Upon the return [ \* 472 ] of the depositions to the alcalde, he entered the following decree :

*Decree.*

Under advisement, [*vistos.*] The will, proved by a legalized notarial act to have been made by Dona Maria Josefa Deslondes, who was the lawful wife of Don Bertrand Gravier, is declared valid and subsisting ; let it be kept and executed in all its parts ; and in order that this declaration, relative to said will, may remain permanent, there shall be placed on the notarial register, and on the original will, a note referring to the proceedings, giving to the parties interested certified copies of both documents, whenever they may ask for them. And whereas the said Don Bertrand Gravier, sole heir, has attained the years of majority, and that the property is notoriously large, there is, for this reason, no necessity for judicial proceedings ; and for security for payment of the six thousand dollars to the absent heirs, he (Gravier) will immediately mortgage the plantation until final payment, or till otherwise agreed to by the parties. Whereupon, these proceedings terminated, let the costs be taxed by D'n Louis Liotaud, after acceptance and oath, and let them be paid by the heir, twenty-four reals having been received as the assessor's fee.

(Signed)

PEDRO DE MARIGNY,  
LICENTIATE MANUEL SERRANO.

Thus decreed by D'n Pedro de Marigny, knight of the order of St. Louis, and first alcalde for his majesty, having original jurisdiction in this city and its judicial precincts, with the approbatory opinion of D'n Manuel Serrano, assessor general of this intendency, and he signed the same in the city of New Orleans, the 21st November, 1792. (Signed)

PEDRO PEDESCLAUX,  
*Not. Pub.*

By this will, the testatrix bestowed legacies in favor of a number of her relations, and instituted her husband for her sole and universal heir, in order that after her death he should inherit the remainder of her property. The defendants claim the property described in the bill under titles derived from this heir.

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The bill charges that Bertrand Gravier, fraudulently induced the notary to prepare a will for his wife, and witnesses to attest the act, and, although the legal formalities were wanting which were necessary to its validity, a "sham decree" of probate was procured from the alcalde by the corrupt agency of the said instituted heir. The defendants deny these allegations, and they [ \* 473 ] \* have not been supported by testimony. The will has remained without contestation for above a half century. The alcalde, assessor, notary, and witnesses, maintained during their lives a good reputation for probity. The property of the testatrix was distributed without opposition, according to the provisions of the will, and is now held, under titles derived from the instituted heir. This evidence disposes of the allegations of the bill, except those which impugn the sufficiency of the act as a legal instrument.

That question, in our opinion, is closed by the decree of the alcalde. That decree declares the will to be valid and subsisting, and directs its execution. We are obliged to treat the decree as the judicial act of a court of competent jurisdiction. In fact, it was the only judicial authority in the province of Louisiana, except that exercised by the governor.

This decree remains in full force, never having been impeached, except in this collateral way. The courts of the United States have no probate jurisdiction, and must receive the sentences of the courts to which the jurisdiction over testamentary matters is committed, as conclusive of the validity and contents of a will; an original bill cannot be sustained upon an allegation that the probate of a will is contrary to law. If any error was committed in allowing the probate, the remedy is in the State courts, according to their appropriate modes of proceeding; such was the decision of this court in *Tarver v. Tarver*, 9 Pet. 174.

The decision of this question is sufficient to dispose of the case, and we decline any inquiry in reference to any other which was discussed at the hearing.

Decree of the circuit court affirmed.

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Ledoux v. Black.

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AMARON LEDOUX and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. JOHN BLACK  
and others.

18 H. 473.

SPANISH GRANTS—CONFIRMATION WITHOUT BOUNDARIES OR SPECIFIC LOCATION.

1. Where a Spanish grant is confirmed, which lacks specific boundaries or location, no title passes until the location is made by a survey.
2. A person acquiring title by patent before this is done from the United States, will not have his title defeated by the subsequent location of the confirmed claim on the same land. *Stanford v. Taylor*, 18 H. 409, *ante*.

WRIT of error to the supreme court of Louisiana.

The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Carlisle* and *Mr. Badger*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 474 ]

This cause is brought here from the supreme court of Louisiana, by writ of error, under the 25th section of the judiciary act of 1789. The only question presented for our consideration is, which party has the better right to the land in dispute? The defendant, Black, claims title under an entry made in 1808, and a patent founded on the entry, dated in 1810, in the name of General Lafayette, for a thousand acres. The validity of this title as against the United States is not denied; but the plaintiffs claim to have an elder title, by virtue of a concession to Ursino Bouligny, of forty arpens front by forty arpens in depth, dated January 10, 1796, of which the plaintiffs are assignees. They allege that under an act of congress of February, 1813, Bouligny prosecuted his claim to the proper register and receiver, who reported in its favor on the 20th of November, 1816; that their report was confirmed by act of congress, the 11th of May, 1820, and that claim was regularly surveyed by order of the surveyor general of Louisiana, in 1843, and the survey approved in 1844.

To show the point made and decided on these facts, by the supreme court of Louisiana, we give an extract of their opinion, which is found in the record:

“Conceding,” (says the court,) “for the sake of argument, that the claim of the plaintiffs was filed in the land office in the manner required by law, before the issuing of the patent to General Lafayette; that it has been confirmed by the act of congress of the 11th of May, 1820, and that the confirmation should be made to refer back to the date of the original title, unless that title or a survey



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made under it by the Spanish surveyor, in compliance with the order of the governor, will enable the court to ascertain the specific boundaries of the land granted, the location of the warrant under which the patent issued to General Lafayette cannot be disturbed. We have uniformly adhered to the rule laid down by our predecessors in the cases of *Lefebvre v. Cameau*, 11 L. R. 323; *Slack v. Orillon*, 11 L. R. 587; *Lott et al. v. Prudhomme et al.*, 3 R. R. 293; *Metoyer v. Larenaudière*, 6 R. R. 139.

“In the case of *Lott*, the court say, referring to the [ \*475 ] other two: \* ‘We then held, that when the boundaries of a confirmed claim are vague and uncertain, and are to be fixed by the operations of the surveying department, or such confirmation is only the recognition of a pre-existing right or claim, and before the survey and location the government sells a part of the land not necessarily embraced within the tract confirmed, the title of the purchaser will prevail.’ Let us test the title of the plaintiffs by that rule, and ascertain whether the land now claimed is necessarily embraced within the tract confirmed to them, supposing that such a confirmation had taken place.

“There was no survey under the Spanish government, and no possession by the grantee. The boundaries are to be ascertained exclusively by the calls of the *requête*, and of the order of the governor upon it. Both describe the land as a tract of forty arpens front by forty deep, in the district of Point Coupée, *en el parage*, called the Lagoon of the Raccourci. It is not stated whether the land is to front upon the Lagoon, or upon the Mississippi river; and as one location would answer the calls as well as the other, the description is, perhaps, on that ground alone defective. *Lafayette v. Blanc*, 3 Annual R. 59.

“But supposing that the front was intended to be upon the river, where is it to begin, how is it to run, and where is it to end? Whether the words of description used mean at the place called the Lagoon, or in the vicinity of the Lagoon, the starting point of the survey is alike uncertain, and the designation of it by the surveyor who located the grant purely arbitrary, so far at least as it affects the rights of the defendants.”

Until the confirmation took place, (supposing the act of 1820 did confirm *Bouligny's* claim,) no valid title as against the United States was vested in the grantee to any specific tract of land. We need only to refer to the case of *De Vilemont v. The United States*, 13 How. 266, for authority to this effect. The cases are alike in all their features.

Nor did the mere act of confirmation tend to locate the claim,

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The United States v. Booth.

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and sever the land from the public domain; this could only be done by a public survey, and which was not done till 1844. Up to that date the government could sell and convey a legal title to General Lafayette, regardless of the fact that Boulogny's concession existed, and might be surveyed on the land previously granted. This question was settled by the decision in the case of *Menard's Heirs v. Massey*, 8 How. 301, and is not now open to controversy.

We order that the judgment of the supreme court of Louisiana be affirmed.

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THE UNITED STATES v. SHERMAN M. BOOTH and others

## SAME v. SHERMAN M. BOOTH.

18 H. 476-7.

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## RULE ON CLERK OF STATE COURT AS TO RECORD.

1. This court will enforce the duty of a return to a writ of error to a State court by a rule on the clerk of the court, where the writ is not obeyed.
2. Where such a case involves all the matters between the same parties, and others also that are involved in another case, the court will not hear the latter case until the full record is before the court in the first, where all the matters in both cases have grown out of the same transaction.

THE motion made by Attorney General Cushing, and the facts on which it is founded, are sufficiently stated in the opinion of the court.

Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the court.

The court proceed to dispose of the motion made by the attorney general to docket the case of *The United States v. Booth*, to stand for argument in this court at the next term.

In support of this motion he has produced a copy of the record of the proceedings in the supreme court of Wisconsin in the above mentioned case, certified by the clerk under the seal of the court, by which it appears that Booth was indicted in the district court of the United States for the district of Wisconsin, for aiding a fugitive slave to escape from the custody of the marshal—the marshal having the said slave at that time legally in his custody; and that upon that indictment the said Booth was tried and found guilty, and sentenced by the court to be imprisoned for one month, and to pay a fine of one thousand dollars. That while he was thus imprisoned he obtained a writ of *habeas corpus* from the State court; and, upon a hearing in the supreme court of the State, was discharged from imprisonment by that court, upon the ground that

the imprisonment under the sentence of the district court of the United States was illegal.

It further appears, that a writ of error afterwards issued from this court, at the instance of the attorney general in behalf of the United States, returnable to the present term, and directed to the judges of the supreme court of the State of Wisconsin, in order to bring the said proceedings and judgment here for revision, according to the provisions of the 25th section of the act of [ \* 478 ] \* congress of 1789, ch. 20. But no return has been made to the writ; and it appears by the affidavit of the district attorney, filed with the motion, that the writ of error was duly served on the clerk of the supreme court of the State, and that he was informed by the said clerk that the court had directed him to make no return to the writ of error.

Upon this state of facts the attorney general has made the motion above mentioned.

The writ of error, without doubt, was rightfully issued from this court to carry into execution the appellate powers confided to it by the constitution and laws of the United States; and it was the duty of the clerk to obey it, and to send a transcript of the record and proceedings therein mentioned, together with the writ of error, to this court at the present term. And certainly the order of no other tribunal will justify an officer in disobeying the process of this court lawfully issued.

The refusal of the clerk, however, cannot prevent the exercise of the appellate powers of this court; and the court will take such order in the case, as will enable it to fulfill the duties imposed upon it.

But in a matter of so much gravity and importance, we deem it proper, before any other proceeding is had, to lay a rule upon the clerk to make the return required by the writ of error; on or before the first day of the next term of this court; or to show cause, if any he hath, to excuse or justify his neglect or refusal to obey the writ.

The motion to docket the case is, therefore, continued over to the next term, and the court will make the following order:

*Rule.*

It having been suggested and shown to this court by the attorney general of the United States, that the writ of error heretofore allowed and awarded by the chief justice of the supreme court of the United States, and which issued out of this court, pursuant to the several acts of congress in such case made and provided, directed to the supreme court of the State of Wisconsin, requiring the

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record and proceedings of the said supreme court of the State of Wisconsin in the matter of Sherman M. Booth, for a writ of *habeas corpus* and to be discharged from imprisonment, to be sent to this court, has not been returned pursuant to the exigency of the said writ:

It is thereupon ordered, that the clerk of said supreme court of the State of Wisconsin do make due return of said writ of error, pursuant to the mandate therein contained, and according to the laws of the United States in that behalf, on or before \* the first day of the term of this court next to be holden [ \* 479 ] at the city of Washington, on the first Monday of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, or then and there show cause why such return has not been made in conformity to law. And it is further ordered that a copy of this rule be served on the said clerk on or before the first day of August next.

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STEPHEN V. R. ABLEMAN, Plff. in Er.,	}	No. 35.—In error to the
v.		supreme court of the
SHERMAN M. BOOTH.		State of Wisconsin.

Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the court.

Upon looking into the transcript in this case, we find that the questions of constitutional law which it involves arose in a preliminary proceeding in the case between the same parties, of which we have just spoken. In that case the whole subject was disposed of in the State court, and the principal question in it is precisely the same with that which is presented in this, which the attorney general proposes to argue. The two cases ought to be argued together. it would hardly be proper for the court, where questions of so much interest are concerned, to hear a portion of them at one term and a portion of them at another. All of the questions which are involved in the two cases have grown out of one transaction, and depend upon the same facts, and it is impossible to decide one without disposing of the principal question in the other. The court, therefore, will not hear the argument in these cases separately. They must be argued together. And as the principal case is not before the court in a form that will enable the court to hear it at the present term, this preliminary portion of it must be continued until the next term, to be argued when the whole subject is ready for hearing.

JOHN BACON and others, Stockholders of the Commercial Bank of Natchez, Appellants, v. WILLIAM ROBERTSON and others, Appellees.

18 H. 480.

EFFECT OF A JUDGMENT OF FORFEITURE OF CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS OF THE STOCKHOLDERS IN THE CORPORATION.

1. The statutes of Mississippi authorized the court which declares the charter of a banking company forfeited to appoint a trustee to wind up its affairs.
2. Both by the statutes of the State and the more modern decisions of the courts of England, chancery has jurisdiction to protect the rights both of creditors and stockholders in such cases.
3. Hence, where, after paying all the debts of the corporation, there remained a large amount of property, credits, &c., in the hands of the trustee, for which he refused to account to the stockholders, they may maintain a bill in chancery to compel him to such accounting, and for a distribution of the surplus in his hands.
4. Where a number of these shareholders are citizens of States other than that in which the trustee resides, they may maintain such a suit in the courts of the United States, on behalf of themselves and all shareholders not citizens of that State, against the trustee and the other stockholders, citizens of the same State with the trustee.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the southern district of Mississippi, and the case is well stated in the opinion of the court. Part of the matters involved in the case was before the court in the case in 16 How. 106; 21 Curtis, 45.

*Mr. Wharton and Mr. Yerger*, for appellants.

*Mr. Lawrence*, for appellees.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

This bill was filed in the circuit court against William Robertson, a trustee appointed to liquidate the affairs of the late Commercial Bank of Natchez, Mississippi, and such of the stockholders of the bank as are citizens of that State, and is prosecuted by a number of stockholders, owning one fifth part of the capital stock, for themselves, and such of the stockholders as are citizens of Mississippi, or defendants in the bill.

[ \* 481 ] \* The Commercial Bank was incorporated and organized under enactments of the legislature in 1836, with a capital of \$3,050,000, divided into shares of \$100 each, which are now distributed among two hundred and eighty persons.

The corporation carried on the business of banking through the agency of presidents, directors, cashiers, and other officers, at Natchez, and four other towns of Mississippi, for a number of years. During this time there was a temporary suspension of

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Bacon v. Robertson.

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specie payments, which the bill avers to have been accidental, and to have formed the only ground for the proceedings taken against the corporation. In June, 1845, the circuit court of Adams county rendered a judgment against the bank, upon an information in the nature of a *quo warranto* preferred pursuant to the act of the legislature of July, 1843. By this judgment the bank was "prejudged and excluded from further holding or exercising the liberties, privileges, and franchises granted by the said charter;" "the liberties, privileges, and franchises granted to the bank were seized" by the State; the "property, books, and assets of the bank" were adjudged to be seized and delivered to a trustee, who might have execution therefor. William Robertson was appointed that trustee "to take charge of the books and assets of the bank." His duties are declared, conformably to the act of 1843, which will be considered in another part of this opinion.

The bank appealed from this judgment, and in the spring session of the high court of errors and appeals, in 1846, it was affirmed. William Robertson entered upon the office of trustee in July, 1846. He took possession of money, stocks, evidences of debt, and real estate having a nominal value of near four millions of dollars, and continues to hold them, except in so far as he has applied them to the payment of the charges of the trust, and the debts of the corporation. The bill alleges that all the debts have been paid, and that only a small sum is due for costs, and that property of great value, consisting of money, stocks, evidences of debt, bonds, and personalty, remains with the trustee, who refuses to account for them to the stockholders. The object of the bill is to establish the title of the stockholders to this surplus; and to obtain the ratable shares of such of them as are able and willing to join as plaintiffs in this suit. The bill names a number of the stockholders as parties, and is fitted to embrace all by the representation of these.

The defendants joined in a general demurrer to the bill; a decree of dismissal was rendered at the hearing at the circuit, and, by appeal, was taken up to this court to revise that decision.

\* When the defendant, Robertson, assumed the office of [ \* 482 ] trustee, his duties were defined by two acts of the legislature of Mississippi. The act of July, 1843, directed the institution of suits against such of the banking corporations of the State as had violated their charters in such a manner as to incur their forfeiture, and prescribed the form of the suits for the enforcement of that forfeiture. It enacted "that upon a judgment of forfeiture against any bank, the debtors of the bank shall not be released



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from their debts and liabilities to the same;'' but it was made the duty of the circuit court, rendering the said judgment, to appoint one or more trustees to take charge of the books and assets of the banks; who should sue for and collect all debts due such bank, and sell and dispose of all property owned by it, or held by others for its use; and the proceeds of the debts, when collected, and of the property when sold, to apply, as may hereafter be directed by law, to the payment of the debts of such bank. The trustee was made subject to a criminal prosecution for embezzlement, conversion of the trust property, as a failure to account for it according to law; and both acts prescribed a bond to be given to secure the faithful performance of his duty. The act of February, 1846, amended and enlarged the scope of the act of 1843, and was applicable to all trustees appointed under either.

This act provided a summary remedy in favor of the trustee to obtain the control of the corporate property; for an inventory to be made to the first court, after his appointment; for an order of sale of all the corporate property at auction, for cash, after a notice of ninety days, at specified places; for commissioners to audit the claims against the banks, and for their presentation to these commissioners; for early decisions upon the exceptions to their report; for a final decree of distribution, first, in the payment of expenses, then public dues, costs, and fees, the debts reported, and, lastly, "the surplus, if any, shall be ratably distributed among the stockholders." There was a provision that the bills of the bank should be receivable for debts, and that the debtor might redeem from any purchaser of his debt or obligation, (so sold,) during two years, by paying the purchase-money, all costs, and twelve and a half per cent. interest. The object of the two statutes can hardly be misconceived. They are parts of a system, the latter act being auxiliary to, and adopted in aid of, the provisions of the earlier act of 1843—the two acts containing the full expression of the will of the legislature. The circumstances of the legislature enabled it to defer the promulgation of its entire policy until the year 1846. The exigencies of the State were entirely answered by the directions given in 1843 to the executive officers to take [ \* 483 ] \* initiatory measures for placing these corporations under restraint, and for the security of their property. To effectuate these, involved delay and litigation, and the legislature might well await their issue, before unfolding their whole plan of liquidation and settlement. The two statutes which embody it have formed the subject of much discussion in the courts of Mississippi, and difficulty has been experienced there in carrying them

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into execution. No suit has been instituted there by the stockholders, though their rights have been incidentally debated, both at the bar and by the supreme appellate court. To comprehend the import of this legislation, we must consider the mischiefs it was designed to prevent or remove, and the mode adopted to accomplish the end; for the legislation is of a character wholly remedial. The common law of Great Britain was deficient in supplying the instrumentalities for a speedy and just settlement of the affairs of an insolvent corporation whose charter had been forfeited by a judicial sentence. The opinion usually expressed as to the effect of such a sentence was unsatisfactory and questioned. There had been instances in Great Britain of the dissolution of public or ecclesiastical corporations by the exertion of the public authority, or as a consequence of the death of their members, and parliament and the courts had affirmed in these instances that the endowments they had received from the prince or pious founders would revert in such a case. Stat. de terris Templariorum, 17 Edw. II.; Dean and Canons of Windsor, Godb. 211; Johnson v. Norway, Winch. 37; Owen, 73; 6 Vin. Abr. 280. What was to become of their personal estate and of their debts and credits had not been settled in any adjudged case, and as was said by Pollexfen in the argument of the *quo warranto* against the city of London, was perhaps "*non definitur in jure.*" Solicitor Finch, who argued for the crown in that cause, admitted, "I do not find any judgment in a *quo warranto* of a corporation being forfeited." Treby, on behalf of the city, said, "the dissolving a corporation by a judgment in law, as is here sought, I believe is a thing that never came within the compass of any man's imagination till now; no, not so much as in the putting of a case. For in all my search, (and upon this occasion I have bestowed a great deal of time in searching,) I cannot find that it ever so much as entered into the conception of any man before; and I am the more confirmed in it because so learned a gentleman as Mr. Solicitor has not cited any one such case wherein it has been (I do not say adjudged but) even so much as questioned or attempted; and, therefore, I may very boldly call this a case *primæ impressionis.*" The argument of Pollexfen was equally positive. The power of courts to adjudge a forfeiture so as to dissolve a corporation \* was affirmed in that case, [\* 484] but the effect of that judgment was not illustrated by any execution, and the courts were relieved from their embarrassment by an act of parliament annulling it. Smith's case, 4 Mod. 53; Skin. 310; 8 St. Tri. 1042, 1057, 1283. Nor have the discussions since the Revolution extended our knowledge upon this

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intricate subject. The case of *Rex v. The Amery*, 2 D. & E. 515, has exerted much influence upon text writers. The questions were, whether a judgment of seizure *quousque* upon a default was final, and if so, whether the king's grant of pardon and restitution would overreach and defeat a charter granting to a new body of men the same liberties intermediate the seizure and the pardon. The king's bench, relying upon the Year-book of 15 Edw. IV., declared the judgment to be final and the new charter irrepealable. But the house of lords reversed the judgment. The judges, upon an examination of the original roll of the case in the Year-book, discovered that it did not support the conclusion drawn from it, and Chief Baron Eyre says, "that Lord Coke had adopted the doctrine too hastily." The discussions upon this case show how much the knowledge of the writ of *quo warranto*, as it had been used and applied under the Plantagenets and Tudors, had gone from the memories of courts and lawyers. 4 D. & E. 122; Tan. on Quo Warranto, 24. In *Colchester v. Seaber*, 3 Bur. 1866, where the suit was upon a bond, and the defense was, that certain facts had occurred to dissolve the corporation, and that the creditor's claim was extinguished on the bond, Lord Mansfield said, "without an express authority, so strong as not to be gotten over, we ought not to determine a case so much against reason as that parliament should be obliged to interfere." The question occurs here, could parliament interfere? And the answer would be by their authorizing a suit to be brought notwithstanding the dissolution. These are all cases of municipal corporations where the corporations had no rights in the property of the corporation in severalty. The courts of Westminster have found much difficulty in applying the principles settled in regard to such, to the commercial and trading corporations that have come into existence during this century. The courts there within the last twelve months have been troubled to discuss whether a commercial corporation could recover damages for the breach of a parol contract, or whether the contract should have had a seal to make it valid. *Austra. R. M. N. Co. v. Marzetti*, 32 L. & E. 572; 3 Ib. 420. It may be admitted that the courts of law could not give any relief to the shareholders of a corporation disfranchised by a judicial sentence in respect to a corporate right. Their modes of proceeding do not provide for the case

as they have not for many others. 1 Plow. 276, 277; [ \* 485 ] \* *Richards v. Richards*, 2 B. & Adol. 447; Will. Ex. 1129.

But this concession does not involve an acknowledgment that the rights of the corporations are extinguished. Courts of chancery have been forced into a closer contact with these associ-

ations, and have formed a more rational conception of their constitution and a more accurate estimate of their importance to the industrial relations of society. Those courts have evinced a spirit of accommodation of their modes of proceeding so as to adapt them to the changing exigencies of society. Lord Cottenham, in *Wallworth v. Holt*, 4 M. & C. 635, in reference to the conduct of suits in which similar associations were concerned, said: "I think it is the duty of this court to adapt its practice and course of proceeding to the existing state of society, and not, by too strict an adherence to rules and forms established under different circumstances, to decline to administer justice and to enforce rights for which there is no other remedy." In the same spirit, Sir James Wigram, V. C., observes: "Corporations of this kind are in truth little more than private partnerships; and in cases which may be easily suggested, it would be too much to hold that a society of private persons associated together in undertakings which, though certainly beneficial to the public, are nevertheless matters of private property, are to be deprived of their civil rights *inter se*, because, in order to make their common objects more attainable, the crown or legislature have conferred upon them the benefit of a corporate character." *Foss v. Harbottle*, 2 Hare, 491. These just views which have afforded to wise chancellors a sufficient motive to enlarge the scope and relax the rigor of the rules of chancery proceeding, so as to bring the civil rights of individuals in whatever form they may exist, or however complicated or ramified, under the protection of legitimate judicial administration, have been adopted in the United States, not simply for the improvement of methods of proceeding, but also for the adjustment of rights and the assertion of responsibilities among the members of such associations. In the *Bank of the United States v. Deveaux*, 5 Cr. 61, this court held "that the technical definition of a corporation does not uniformly circumscribe its capacities, but that courts for legitimate purposes will contemplate it more substantially; and the court in that case allowed the corporation to use its corporate name for the purposes of suit in the courts of the United States to represent the civil capacities of the persons who composed it. So the court has held that corporate acts need not to be evinced by writing, nor corporate contracts by a common seal; that corporations are liable on contracts made or defaults or torts committed by their officers or agents in the course of their employment. 12 Wheat. \*40; *Ib.* 64; 6 How. 344; 14 [ \*486 ] *Ib.* 468. In *Lennox v. Roberts*, 2 Wheat. 373, the court gave effect to a general assignment of a corporation of its *choses in action* made in anticipation of the expiration of its charter, and

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which was designed to preserve to the corporators their rights of property. In the *Mumma v. Potomac Company*, 8 Pet. 281, it held that the assignment of all the property of a corporation and the surrender and cancellation of its charter with the consent of the legislature, did not defeat the right of the judgment creditor to satisfaction out of the property which had belonged to it. The power of courts of equity in cases like these was recognized as adequate to maintain the rights of the parties beneficially interested, and this doctrine was repeated and developed in *Curran v. Arkansas*, 15 How. 304.

The tendency of the discussions and judgments of the court of chancery in Great Britain, and of the courts of this country, is to concede the existence of a distinct and positive right of property in the individuals composing the corporation, in its capital and business, which is subject in the main to the management and control of the corporation itself; but that cases may arise where the corporators may assert not only their own rights, but the rights of the corporate body. And no reason can be given why the dissolution of a corporation, whether by judicial sentence or otherwise, whose capital was contributed by shareholders, for a lawful and perhaps laudable enterprise, with the consent of the legislature, should suspend the operation of these principles, or hinder the effective interference of the court of chancery for the preservation of individual rights of property in such a case. The withdrawal of the charter—that is, the right to use the corporate name for the purposes of suits before the ordinary tribunals—is such a substantial impediment to the prosecution of the rights of the parties interested, whether creditors or debtors, as would authorize equitable interposition in their behalf, within the doctrine of chancery precedents. *Stainton v. The Carron Company*, 23 L. and E. 315; *Travis v. Milne*, 9 Hare, 141; 2 Ib. 491. For the sentence of forfeiture does not attain the rights of property of the corporators or corporation, for then the State would appropriate it. If those rights are put an end to, it would seem to be rather from a careless disregard, or hardened and reckless indifference to consequences, on the part of the public authority, than from any preconceived plan or purpose. For, according to the doctrine of the text writers on this subject, the consequences are visited without any discrimination; the losses are imposed upon those who are not blameworthy, and the benefits are accumulated upon those who are without desert. The

[ \* 487 ] effects of a \*dissolution of a corporation are usually described to be, the reversion of the lands to those who had granted them; the extinguishment of the debts, either to or from



the corporate body, so that they are not a charge nor a benefit to the members. The instances which support the *dictum* in reference to the lands, consist of the statutes and judgments which followed the suppression of the military and religious orders of knights, and whose lands returned to those who had granted them, and did not fall to the king as an escheat; or of cases of dissolution of monasteries and other ecclesiastical foundations, upon the death of all their members; or of donations to public bodies, such as a mayor and commonalty. But such cases afford no analogy to that before us. The acquisitions of real property by a trading corporation are commonly made upon a bargain and sale, for a full consideration, and without conditions in the deed; and no conditions are implied in law in reference to such conveyances. The vendor has no interest in the appropriation of the property to any specific object, nor any reversion, where the succession fails. If the statement of the consequences of a dissolution upon the debts and credits of the corporation is literally taken, there can be no objection to it. The members cannot recover nor be charged with them, in their natural capacities, in a court of law. But this does not solve the difficulty. The question is, has the *bona fide* and just creditor of a corporation, dissolved under a judicial sentence for a breach in its charter, any claim upon the corporate property for the satisfaction of his debt, apart from the reservation in the act of the legislature which directed the prosecution? Can the lands be resumed in disregard of their rights by vendors, who have received a full payment of their price, and executed an absolute conveyance? Can the careless, improvident, or faithless debtor, plead the extinction of his debt, or of the creditor's claim, and thus receive protection in his delinquency? The creditor is blameless—he has not participated in the corporate mismanagement, nor procured the judicial sentence; he has trusted upon visible property acquired by the corporation, in virtue of its legislative sanction. How can the vendors of the lands or the delinquent debtors resist the might of his equity? But, if the claims of the creditor are irresistible, those of the stockholder are not inferior, at least against the parties who claim to hold the corporate property. The money, evidences of debt, lands, and personalty acquired by the corporation, were purchased with the capital they lawfully contributed to a legitimate enterprise, conducted under the legislative authority. The enterprise has failed under circumstances, it may well be, which entitle the State to withdraw its special support and encouragement; but \*the [ \* 488 ] State does not affirm that any cause for the confiscation of the property, or for the infliction of a heavier penalty, has arisen.



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It is a case, therefore, in which courts of chancery, upon their well-settled principles, would aid the parties to realize the property belonging to the corporation, and compel its application to the satisfaction of the demands which legitimately rest upon it.

In our view of the equity of this bill we have the support and sanction of the legislature of Mississippi. Their legislation excludes all the consequences which have been imputed as necessary to a sentence of dissolution on a civil corporation. From the plenitude of their powers, for the amelioration of the condition of the body politic, and the supply of defects in their system of remedial laws, they have afforded a plan for the liquidation and settlement of the business of these corporations in which the equities of the creditors and shareholders respectively are recognized, as attaching to all the corporate property of whatever description. And the inquiry arises, who is authorized to obstruct the enforcement of these equities, in so far as the stockholders of the Commercial Bank of Natchez are concerned? The creditors have been satisfied. The defendant in the present suit is the trustee appointed under these legislative enactments. His demurrer confesses that he has received money, stocks, evidences of debt, lands, and personal property, which he refuses to distribute. He claims that the stockholders have no rights since the dissolution of the corporation, and if any, they must be looked for in the circuit court of Adams county, Mississippi. But the trustee cannot deny the title of the stockholders to a distribution. To collect and distribute the property of the corporation among the creditors and stockholders, is his commission—for this end he was placed in the possession of the property, and was armed with all the powers he has exercised.

His title is in subordination to theirs, and his duties are to maintain their rights and to consult their advantage. *Pearson v. Lindley*, 2 Ju. 758; 3 Pet. 43; 4 Bligh. 1; *Willis Trus.* 125, 172, 173. He is estopped from making the defense of a want of title in the stockholders. Nor is the objection to the jurisdiction of this court tenable. Ten years have nearly elapsed since this trust was created. The acts of the legislature contemplated a prompt and speedy settlement. They direct the reduction of all the property into ready money, and an early distribution among the parties concerned. The trustee confesses that he has not sold the lands nor personal estate, and that he has refused to distribute the money. He has committed a palpable breach of trust, according to the case made by the bill and as confessed by the demurrer.

[ \* 489 ] All the other trusts having been \* fulfilled, the stockholders are entitled to such an administration as will be most

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beneficial to them, or to a sale of the trust property in the manner prescribed by the statute of Mississippi. Nor is the objection to the form of the suit tenable. If the trust estate had been liquidated and the interests of the stockholders ascertained, any stockholder might have maintained a suit for his aliquot share without including any other stockholder. *Smith v. Snow*, 3 Mad. C. R. 310. But the trust estate has not been sold, nor are the names of all the stockholders ascertained, the trustee is called on to account, and the bill asks for the collection and disposal of the remaining property under the authority of the court of chancery.

The stockholders are interested in these questions, and are then proper parties to the bill. The number of the parties renders it impracticable to bring all before the court, and therefore the suit may be prosecuted in the form which has been employed in this suit. This court sustained such a bill in the case of *Smith v. Swormstedt*, 16 How. 288.

We do not intend to decide any of the questions of the cause which may arise as to the mode of administering the relief prayed for in this bill. Our opinion is that the plaintiffs have shown a proper case for equitable interposition by the circuit court, and that the decree of that court dismissing the bill is erroneous.

Decree reversed, and cause remanded.

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**SOLOMON S. MASTERS and another, Plaintiffs in Error, v. FREDERICK L. and PHILLIPPE BARREDA.**

18 H. 489.

**CONSTRUCTION OF A MERCANTILE AGREEMENT FOR CREDIT.**

1. The case turns upon the construction of a contract for continuous delivery of guano by defendants to plaintiffs; the agreement evidenced by correspondence.
2. This court, agreeing with the circuit courts, holds that, in the light of this correspondence, defendants were not bound to deliver a cargo of guano consigned to plaintiffs, while there was an indebtedness of \$40,000, without payment or security for the cargo so consigned.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the eastern district of Virginia. The facts are stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Johnson*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Carlisle*, *Mr. Bradley*, and *Mr. F. L. Smith*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 490 ]  
This is an action of *assumpsit* brought in the circuit

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court of the United States for the eastern district of Virginia, by the defendants in error, against Masters and Son, to recover from them a balance of \$77,966.13, arising from the sales of guano, [ \* 491 ] \* as stated in the bill of particulars, at pages three and four of the record.

The transactions out of which this dispute arose commenced on the 21st of January, 1854.

Barreda and Brother, residing in the city of Baltimore, were largely engaged in the importation of guano into the United States. Masters and Son were shipping and commission merchants in Alexandria, Virginia. Barreda and Brother had found it necessary in conducting their business to establish a limit of credit, both as to time and amount for purchases made by those who dealt with them. For any excess above that credit, purchasers had to pay cash, or give satisfactory paper, with their indorsement. The uncontradicted statement of the Barredas, in their letter to Masters and Son of the 15th May, 1854; corroborated by other circumstances, shows, that in the year 1852, this limit of credit was \$25,000; and that their dealings with the Masters from that time, up to the sale of two cargoes of guano on the 21st January, 1854, and afterwards, until changed by the letters between them of the 9th and 10th March, 1854, had been regulated accordingly.

The sale of the two cargoes of guano, just mentioned, is as follows:

“ We have sold to Messrs. S. S. Masters and Son two cargoes of Peruvian guano—from vessels Lucy Elizabeth three hundred and thirty-five tons, and Giaour two hundred and seventy-one—both on their way from Peru. The said guano to be delivered in the port of Alexandria, in Virginia, when the vessels may arrive. Messrs. Masters and Son will act as our agents to receive the cargo and attend to the vessels, free of any charge, and to pay the value of the guano they may receive, at the price of \$47.50 per ton in bulk, in notes payable in Baltimore, four months after date.

“ F. BARREDA AND BROTHER.

“ *Baltimore*, 21st January, 1854.”

Subsequently to that date, (the precise time when does not appear from the record,) Masters and Son purchased from the Barredas another cargo of the ship Princess Alice, and on the 18th February a fourth—that of the ship Ailsa.

The Lucy Elizabeth arrived with her cargo at Alexandria on the 1st February. The Giaour, with hers, about the 10th of the same month. Masters and Son attended to unloading the cargoes of both vessels, and sent to the Barredas a certificate of the cargo received

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from The Lucy Elizabeth, on the 2d March, namely, 485.21.4 tons of No. 1 guano, (in bulk at \$47.50 per ton,) and 25.1.21 tons of No. 2 guano in bulk, for which they were charged \$24,108.64; the quantity of No. 2 being charged \*to [\*492] them at \$42.50. They remitted to the Barredas on the 6th March, three notes of hand payable on the 2d and 5th of July; two of them for \$8,000, and a third for \$8,108.64; amounting to \$24,108.64. Up to this time, the cargoes of The Giaour and The Princess Alice had not been ascertained, though both ships were then being unladed under the agency of Masters and Son, according to the arrangement in the memorandum of sale of the 21st January. And the correspondence shows that then there had not been any extension by the Barredas of the amount of credit, which had hitherto been allowed to Masters and Son upon their previous purchases. In this state of their dealing Masters and Son wrote to the Barredas on the 9th March: "As our purchases are likely to be pretty large this year, and we noticed, some time ago, that one of our mutual friends (H. W. Fry) had arranged with you to keep an interest account with him, at six per cent., and we, for the same reason, prefer not to give notes. Further, as it is at times an advantage to have it in our power to make payments when the local exchange is most favorable, we will be obliged, if you will allow us also this accommodation, giving us an average credit of four months on these other cargoes." To this letter Barreda and Brother reply on the 10th March. They state, we will "keep an interest account with you, at six per cent., to facilitate your payments, provided that you will never exceed an average time of four months for the payment of each cargo; and that the balance on account against you will always be under forty thousand dollars, being the largest credit we use to allow." The Masters reply in a letter of the 11th March: "Your acceptance of our proposition, made with the view of our not having to pay the whole value of our purchases in notes, &c., is also duly appreciated—and we note the conditions regarding the open account."

At the date of this arrangement, there was charged to Masters and Son on the books of Barreda and Brother \$24,108.64, the value of The Lucy Elizabeth's cargo, for which the Masters had given three notes, payable on the 2d and 5th July. Eighteen days after this arrangement the Masters send to the Barredas a certificate of Giaour's cargo, amounting to \$17,094.34, and remit a payment on account of it of \$6,000. The next item in the account is the value of the cargo of The Princess Alice, amounting to \$38,029.92. But they had written to the Barredas on the

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30th March, saying: "The Ailsa cannot now reach this too soon for us, and we prefer not relinquishing our purchase of the said cargo; and, further, we believe we are selling by considerable the bulk of the guano applied for here, (we wish it was at a better profit,) and find the demand good. From present prospects we shall want a cargo each ensuing month. With your present unprecedentedly large importations, we suppose we can make our calculations to get this supply from you without having to look far ahead." The Barredas answer: "For the present, we have no cargo to offer you in the time you mention." But on the 18th April they write: "We will send you The Beatrice, reply immediately." Masters and Son write on the same day: "We will take The Beatrice;" and the Barredas rejoin: "Ship Beatrice will be ordered to you, provided she arrives before the end of May next." She arrived on the 24th April, and was ordered to Masters and Son. On the same day the Barredas ask in another letter: "Will you take The Ailsa if she arrives here?" The Masters answer: "Send The Ailsa if she comes as heretofore concluded upon." She arrived early in May, and was ordered to Alexandria. Thus, in the whole, five cargoes were bought by the Masters from the Barredas. Each of them upon a credit of four months, notes having been given for that of The Lucy Elizabeth, with the understanding by both parties that notes were not to be given for the other purchases, the quantities of which had not been ascertained when the arrangement of the 10th March was made, and that they were to be paid for according to that arrangement. But the value of three of the cargoes had been ascertained, amounting, according to the returns of Masters and Son to Barreda and Brother, to \$79,232.90. Payments had been made to the amount of \$29,000. On the 12th May the Barredas wrote, calling the attention of Masters and Son to the state of the account, and requesting them to make a remittance of \$10,232.90, "as our limit in your account is \$40,000, and it being then beyond the limit of the credit in the amount of the remittance asked for." In a postscript to the letter, they say: "Of course the value of The Beatrice and Ailsa cargoes must be paid cash. 2 P. C. off." To this letter the Masters reply without making the remittance, and say: "On the 9th March last, we had purchased from you four cargoes of guano, about 2,500 tons, or \$120,000 worth, at four months—no other terms mentioned, (and to this moment we have never heard of any other,) three of the said cargoes were received and being received, and the fourth was daily expected. On the above-named date we asked you to allow us to keep an interest or open account with you, as we did

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not like to pay the whole value of our purchases in notes; to this you had no objection to the value of \$40,000; the balance, as we had to infer, we must settle for agreeably to the original bill of purchase." To this letter the Barredas reply: "Yours of the 13th instant has been received. When we first went into business with you, we mentioned to you, that our limit for credit was \*\$25,000, we making to you the sales of three, or [ \* 494 ] four, or twenty cargoes, our impression would have been, as was in that case, that we were to accept your paper for \$25,000, and the balance that you might owe in satisfactory paper with your indorsement. Certainly, you could never have expected us to accept your notes for such an amount as our sales, though your responsibility may be superior to it. Afterwards, when you proposed to open with us an account, with interest, to facilitate your payments, we agreed to it; provided, that you would never exceed an average time of four months for the payment of each cargo, and that the balance on account against you will always be under \$40,000—this being the largest credit we use to allow. You also understood in the same way our conditions, and took good care to make a remittance of \$6,000, together with the return of The Giaour's cargo, to keep yourselves within the limits of your credit with us." In a few days after writing their letter of the 17th, Barreda and Brother made an effort through the agency of Mr. Coyle, to have an amicable settlement with Masters and Son, offering to them either of the following propositions: That they would deliver to Mr. Coyle all the guano received from The Beatrice and Ailsa, and such a portion of the cargo of The Princess Alice as may be necessary to cover the \$10,234.90 of excess of their account—or settle their values in cash, less two per cent.—or give satisfactory paper with their indorsement, payable in New York or Baltimore, at four months from the day when the offer was made, that being the 22d of May.

Neither of these propositions were accepted, and this suit was brought to recover the balance on account against Masters and Son, including the value of all the guano they had received from The Lucy Elizabeth, The Giaour, Princess Alice, Beatrice, and Ailsa, after having given to them credit for payments made. There is no dispute concerning either the debit or credit side of the account, but the controversy arose from the different view entertained by the parties as to their respective rights under the arrangement made for an interest account and the limit of credit mentioned in it, and whether, in the actual state of the account, and under the course pursued by the Barredas, they were justified in arresting



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the delivery of the undischarged portions of the cargoes of The Beatrice and Ailsa, on account of the neglect and refusal of Masters and Son to make the required remittance to reduce the account against them to \$40,000.

Our first objection to the construction of that arrangement as given by Masters and Son, is its variance from the terms used by them in their letter of the 9th of March, asking for the [ \* 495 ] \* substitution of an interest account, instead of giving notes for their purchases, and from their language in their letter of the 11th March, in reply to the letter of the Barredas of the 10th, granting their request upon the conditions mentioned in it. They preface their application by saying, "as our purchases will be very large this year, we prefer not to give notes, and will be obliged if you will allow us an interest account, giving us an average credit of four months on these other cargoes;" and in their letter of the 11th say, "your acceptance of our proposition, made with the view of our not having to pay the whole value of our purchases in notes, &c., is also duly appreciated, and we note the conditions regarding the open account." If from the first an application may be made that it was their intention that the favor asked by them was to be applied to future purchases, and not to include purchases which they had made and which had not been paid for, there can be no doubt that their understanding of the arrangement was, that it was to include both, when in thanking the Barredas for their acceptance of their proposition, they state it was made with the view of their not having to pay the whole value of their purchases in notes. Besides having applied the arrangement to their purchases of the cargoes of The Giaour and Princess Alice, both of which had been bought, but neither of which had been ascertained when they asked for an interest account, and when it was granted, they could not afterwards give to the arrangement an exclusive application to cargoes to be thereafter bought; and when they say their request for an interest or open account had been made with the view of not having to pay the whole value of their purchases in notes, and afterwards say, "we note the conditions regarding the open account," one of them being that the balance on account against them shall never be larger than \$40,000, it is conclusive that they then understood that amount to be the extent of their credit for all of their purchases, according to the account as it then stood on the books of the Barredas, or as it might be enlarged.

But it was urged that the limit of the amount of their credit was not to exceed at the time when the Barredas wrote their letter of the 12th May. It was said that the amount then still due for the

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cargo of The Lucy Elizabeth should not have been taken into the computation in ascertaining whether the balance due by the Masters amounted to more than \$40,000, because that cargo had been sold under a different contract, in no way connected with the other purchases. Such, however, was not the fact, for The Giaour's cargo was bought under the same memorandum of sale; and the cargo of The Princess Alice had been bought before the cargo of The Giaour had been \*ascertained; and the [\*496] Masters, after the arrangement had been made for an interest account, applied it to both, when their cargoes were ascertained, by not giving notes for either, and transmitting their certificates of the quantity of each, without any direction that a new and separate account of their cost should be made of them distinct from the debit against them in the books of the Barredas for the cargo of The Lucy Elizabeth. Had it been intended otherwise, they should have given such a direction; and not have said, we note the conditions regarding the open account, the limitation of the credit to be allowed being one of them, expressed in language so plain that it cannot be doubted that the Barredas never meant to give to Masters and Son a larger credit upon their purchases than \$40,000; and that, when their account exceeded it, they were to have the right to call for payments to reduce it to that amount. When they called for the remittance of \$10,232.90, the account against Masters and Son exceeded it by that amount. They failed to make the payment, and continuing to refuse to do so, we are of the opinion that the Barredas had a right to arrest the delivery of the cargoes of The Beatrice and Ailsa, notwithstanding the indorsement and delivery of the bills of lading to Masters and Son, and that their refusal to deliver the same, as stated in the testimony, is no breach of contract, and is not a bar to the recovery in this action of the amount due for the guano actually received by Masters and Son. Such was the instruction given by the court upon the trial of the case in the circuit court; and, having expressed our concurrence with that view, we will only add, that when there is a dealing between merchants for successive cargoes of merchandise upon time, for which notes of hand were to be given, payable from the date of the ascertainment of the quantity of each cargo, and an arrangement is afterwards made for the substitution of an interest account for the notes which were to be given; and, in that arrangement, the seller stipulates that the allowance of the interest account should depend upon the continuance of the original time of credit; and that the buyer's balance on account should always be under a certain sum; and the buyer

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exceeds that amount, and refuses to make a remittance or payment, upon the call of the seller, to bring the account within that sum, the seller may arrest the further delivery of any cargo or cargoes, though the same was in the course of being delivered to the buyer upon the seller's indorsement of the invoices and bills of lading of such cargoes.

In the absence of all understanding between the buyer and seller that any cargo which had been delivered and not actually paid for, though notes of hand had been given for the same, [ \* 497 ] \* was not to be considered within the new arrangement, such cargo must be taken into the computation in ascertaining whether the balance due by the buyer exceeds the amount of credit allowed to him.

Judgment of the circuit court is affirmed.

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GUSTAVUS T. BEAUREGARD, Appellant, v. THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS and others.

18 H. 497.

EFFECT OF DECISIONS OF STATE COURTS, AS REGARDS LOCAL LAWS, IN THE FEDERAL COURTS.

1. This court follows the decisions of the State courts in the construction of the laws constituting their local jurisprudence. •
2. Hence, when the State courts of Louisiana have carefully and laboriously considered the precise questions raised in the present case, which have reference to the jurisdiction of the probate and district courts, and to the effect of sales made by their orders, this court will receive those decisions as the best evidence of the law on these subjects.
3. The cases referred to and examined.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and the case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Henderson*, for appellant.

*Mr. Taylor*, for appellees.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

The plaintiff's testatrix filed this bill in the circuit court to annul a sale of a portion of the succession of John Poultney, deceased, which had been made under the authority of decrees in the first district court of New Orleans, and of the court of probate of that city, alleging a defect of jurisdiction in the courts, and fraud and irregularity in the proceedings.

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\* Her title to the succession is as heir at law of the [ \* 498 ] children and heirs of John Poultney, of whom she was the mother.

In May, 1818, John Poultney, a merchant of New Orleans, purchased of Mad. Rousseau, her plantation lying on the Mississippi river, a short distance above New Orleans, and which is now included within the corporate limits.

The price agreed to was \$100,000, one fifth of which was paid at the time, and notes with the indorsement of Harrod and Ogdens, (a firm composed of Charles Harrod, Peter V. Ogden, and George M. Ogden,) payable in five annual installments, and secured by a mortgage on the property, were given for the remainder. The mortgage contains a stipulation that, in the event the indorsers should pay either of the notes, they should be subrogated to the rights of the vendor and holder of the mortgage for indemnity. In April, 1819, Poultney acknowledged in a petition to the first district court that his affairs were embarrassed, and that he could not meet his engagements; he made a statement of his property and debts, showing a surplus in his favor, and prayed the court to convene his creditors that they might deliberate upon his proposition for a respite of one, two, and three years.

The court made the order, the creditors were convened, the requisite number agreed to the proposition, and an order was accordingly entered the 28th June, 1819, for a respite of one, two, and three years.

Harrod and Ogdens appeared at this meeting—claimed to have paid the first installment on the purchase of the Rousseau plantation, and assented to the action of the creditors, reserving their mortgage security.

In October, 1819, John Poultney died. His widow, the plaintiff's testatrix, in January thereafter renounced her right as partner in community, and failed to qualify as tutrix of her two children, one aged five, and the other seven years, who were the heirs at law of John Poultney, and did not until eight years after the sales referred to, take any concern about the succession.

The representation made by John Poultney of his affairs at the time his petition for a respite was exhibited, implies a hopeless state of insolvency. His debts are acknowledged to be \$235,000, while his property is rated at \$266,000—but from its nature affording but little prospect that such an amount could be realized. By the renunciation of his widow of her title as partner in community, and her failure to interpose on behalf of her children, the succession was unrepresented, and was what is termed in the Louisiana

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code a vacant estate. In February, 1820, a portion of the creditors of Poultney informed the district court that this succession [ \* 499 ] was insolvent—had no representative, \* nor claimant—and prayed that measures might be taken for the appointment of a syndic to represent and administer it for the benefit of all concerned. A meeting of the creditors was ordered by the court—and took place—resulting in the appointment of three syndics, (one of whom was Peter V. Ogden,) who were recognized by the court. On the 9th of May, 1820, Harrod and Ogden represented in a petition to the district court the facts of the purchase by Poultney of the Rousseau plantation, their payment of the first installment of the purchase money, and their liability to pay another then shortly after to become due; that the succession of Poultney was insolvent, and was in the hands of syndics; and prayed that the plantation might be seized and sold for the satisfaction of their debt and the installments yet unpaid on the mortgage, and for a citation to the syndics. The usual order of seizure was made by the district judge, and a citation was served on one of the syndics. On the 29th May the syndics agreed in court to the terms of sale and waived the appraisement, and the property was sold on the 13th June by the sheriff on the writ of seizure for the payment of the money then due, the purchaser agreeing to assume the mortgage.

At this sale, George M. Ogden, one of the firm of Harrod and Ogden, was the purchaser, and a deed was subsequently executed to him by the sheriff under the order of the court.

Some time after the close of these transactions, a conviction seems to have been impressed on the minds of Harrod and Ogden that the proceedings in the district court were inoperative; and in 1824, Harrod and the representative of Ogden commenced a suit in the court of probate, having for its object to obtain a satisfaction of the same debt, by the sale of the same property. They sought a seizure and sale of the property, without taking any notice of what had been done in the district court, and prayed a citation to Mad. Poultney as tutrix of her children. No citation appears in the record, but there is evidence of a seizure, judgment, and sale.

The purchasers were Charles Harrod and Francis B. Ogden, who are charged to be the representatives of the first purchaser, G. M. Ogden. These purchasers afterwards, in 1824, represented to the district court that the debt to Mad. Rousseau had been paid, and that the mortgage of George M. Ogden, given in 1820, to secure unpaid installments, was not operative, for that the district court had no jurisdiction to make the sale, and asked that it

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might be raised from the property. The sheriff admitted all the facts, and the court granted the petition.

These were the last proceedings which had any relation to the case.

The defendants, by plea and answer, affirm that these \*proceedings were conformable to law, and vested the [ \*500 ] purchasers with all the title which John Poultney ever acquired in the property, and that the plaintiff never had any right therein; that they had no participation in, nor knowledge of, any fraud, but that they have translative titles from these purchasers, and rely upon their sufficiency.

In 1832, Mad. Poultney assumed the office of tutrix of her minor children, and commenced, immediately after, suits in the State courts of Louisiana for the recovery of portions of this plantation. Three of these suits were decided in the supreme court in 1835, after elaborate and learned arguments, and a patient investigation by the court. Poultney's Heirs v. Cecil, 8th La. R. 322; v. Ogden, 8 La. 428; v. Barrett, 8 La. 441. These decisions were made upon a state of facts similar to that presented in this record; and the discussion in those cases has diminished the care and responsibility of this court. For it is apparent that the questions presented to us relate exclusively to the local jurisprudence of Louisiana. When the controversy arose all the parties were citizens of that State, while the subject of the suit is the validity of titles passed under decrees of its courts, and in the course of duty, by their executive officers.

The material inquiries are, whether the first district court had a jurisdiction competent to the legal transfer of the succession of a debtor, who was enjoying a respite from the claims of his creditors for an unexpired term, at the time of his death and before any default had arisen in the fulfillment of the conditions of the respite as to payment. 2. Whether this jurisdiction could be exerted without any citation to the natural heirs, or any measures taken to secure their interests in the succession? 3. Were the modes prescribed for the disposal of the estates of insolvent debtors, or of minors, essential constituents of a valid exercise of the jurisdiction, and for the neglect of these may the sale be collaterally attacked? 4. Did the death of Poultney determine the jurisdiction of the district court, and remove to the court of probate the administration and settlement of the succession, and were all the proceedings in the district court *coram non judice*? 5. Was a citation to the heirs necessary to a valid decree of sale in the court of probate? An important share of the attention of all courts of a limited



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jurisdiction is engrossed in ascertaining the causes over which they may legitimately claim cognizance, and the administration of an involved or insolvent succession, from the number of the parties in interest, and the variety of conflicting and complicated claims that are oftentimes exhibited, frequently affords difficult questions of this description.

The supreme court of Louisiana treat the questions [ \* 501 ] arising \*upon the records now before us, as difficult and embarrassing, calling for undivided and anxious attention, and much care was employed in deciding them, so as to maintain in that State an accordant system of jurisprudence. The claim of an embarrassed debtor to exhibit the condition of his affairs to a court with a view to obtain its assistance to convoke his creditors, that they may deliberate upon a proposition to grant him a delay or respite, and to bind the minority to the conclusions of a consenting majority, is one which has no recognition in the common law. It was derived in Louisiana from the continental codes of Europe, upon which the legal institutions of that State are founded. The supreme court of Louisiana, upon an investigation of those codes, determined that the death of Poultney in a state of insolvency without heirs who were willing to accept his succession unconditionally, and thereby to afford security for the fulfillment of the conditions of the decree of respite which the debtor had assumed, relieved his creditors from their obligations to respect it, and empowered them to proceed, *in rem*, against the estate of their debtor in the hands of a syndic.

The same tribunal, (supreme court of Louisiana,) after tracing the sources of the jurisdiction of the district court, extending, as it did, to "all civil cases," determined that it was not without jurisdiction *ratione materie* of a suit against such an estate, and that judgments rendered in that court, were not radically null. They say, "the undisputed exercise of such a jurisdiction for a long series of years, the general acquiescence of the legal profession, the universal understanding among the people, as well as the courts and bar, form together such contemporaneous interpretations of the laws relating to conflicting jurisdictions, that, however doubtful it may appear on a close analysis, it cannot now be disturbed without the greatest injustice, and inflicting incalculable mischiefs on the country." And in *Robinett v. Compton*, 2 Ann. R. 847, 855, the same court says: "That, previous to the passage of the act of the 18th March, 1820, fixing the jurisdiction of the courts of probate in this State, it seems to have been settled by various decisions of this court that the district courts were not deprived of jurisdiction

*ratione materiæ* in such cases. The practice was universal to bring suits against successions in the district court, and we are not prepared to say it was erroneous." And, since the act of 1820, (which, however, was not promulgated so as to be in force when this sale was made,) the court say, "that such judgments in that court might be erroneous, but were not mere nullities." The jurisdiction of the district court to render the judgment being admitted, the further question arises, was the jurisdiction so exercised as to be operative? The supreme court, in the case of Cecil above cited, \* determine "that the rules which apply to [ \* 502 ] the sale of minors' property as such, when the title is fully vested in them, are not strictly applicable to a case like the present, where the rights of minors were contingent and residuary, subject to the undoubted claims of creditors *deducto ære alieno*, and who, in this very case, appear as beneficiary heirs claiming property already alienated for the payment of debts," &c. And in *McCullough v. Minor*, 2 Ann. 466, the same court affirm "that in cases like this, the purchaser is not bound to look beyond the decree."

The jurisdiction of the court was undoubted, and the jurisprudence of the State has long since been settled that a *bona fide* purchaser at a judicial sale is protected by the decree. 11 Louisa. 68; 13 Louisa. 432; 16 Louisa. 440; 3 Rob. 122. The judgments of the supreme court of Louisiana upon the validity of the sales impugned in this bill were given more than twenty years ago. They have formed the foundation upon which the expectations and conduct of the inhabitants of that State have been regulated. They have quieted apprehensions and doubts respecting a title to an important portion of a large and growing city. They have invited a multitude of transactions and engagements in which the well being of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of the citizens of that State depend. In this bill there are several hundreds of defendants.

The constitution of this court requires it to follow the laws of the several States as rules of decision wherever they properly apply. And the habit of the court has been to defer to the decisions of their judicial tribunals upon questions arising out of the common law of the State, especially when applied to the title of lands.

No other course could be adopted with any regard to propriety. Upon cases like the present the relation of the courts of the United States to a State is the same as that of its own tribunals. They administer the laws of the State, and to fulfill that duty they must find them as they exist in the habits of the people, and in the exposition of their constituted authorities. Without this, the

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peculiar organization of the judicial tribunals of the States and the Union would be productive of the greatest mischief and confusion. *Jackson v. Chew*, 12 Wheat. 153.

But, if we were required to depart from that jurisprudence to find a solution of these difficult and embarrassing questions, we should not have to leave the precedents afforded by this court for the support of many of their conclusions. This court has contributed its share to that stability which results from a respect for things adjudicated: *Status reipublicæ maximè judicatis rebus continetur*. It is the settled doctrine of the court, that when the proceedings of a court of justice are collaterally drawn [ \* 503 ] \*in question, and it appears upon the face of them that the subject-matter was within its jurisdiction, they cannot be impeached for error or irregularity; that, if a court has jurisdiction, its decision upon all the questions that arise regularly in the cause are binding upon all other courts until they are reversed. 2 Pet. 157; 1 Ib. 340. And when the object is to sell the real estate of an insolvent or embarrassed succession, the settled doctrine is, there are no adversary parties—the proceeding is *in rem*—the administrator represents the land. They are analogous to proceedings in admiralty, where the only question of jurisdiction is the power of the court over the thing—the subject-matter before them—without regard to the parties who may have an interest in it. All the world are parties. In the orphans' court, and all the courts which have power to sell the estates of decedents, their action operates on the estate, not on the heirs of the intestate. A purchaser claims not their title, but one paramount. The estate passes by operation of law. 2 How. 319; 11 S. & R. 426; 6 Port. 219, 249.

The identity of the principles applied by the supreme court of Louisiana, in ascertaining the effect of the judgments of their courts, and those accepted as true by this court, leaves no question resting upon the authority of the State tribunals, except that of the nature and extent of the jurisdiction of their courts under the organic law of the State. And no principle would authorize this court to dissent from their conclusions on that subject, when the land disposed of was within their borders, and the parties in interest were citizens belonging to their community.

Our opinion is, that the pleas of the defendants afford a complete answer to the bill; and that the decree of the circuit court must be affirmed.

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The Union Bank of Tennessee v. Jolly's Administrators.

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THE UNION BANK OF TENNESSEE, Appellants, v. MICAHAH J. VAIDEN  
and JOHN H. KEITH, Administrators.

18h	503
L-ed	472
133	257

18 H. 503.

EFFECT OF PROBATE COURT PROCEEDINGS AS A DEFENSE TO A SUIT AGAINST THE ADMIN-  
ISTRATORS IN A FEDERAL COURT.

1. The law of a State limiting the remedies of its citizens in its own courts cannot be applied to prevent the citizens of other States from suing in the courts of the United States in that State, for the recovery of any money or property there to which they may be legally or equitably entitled. *Suydam v. Brodnax*, 14 Peters, 67, reaffirmed.
2. Therefore, where a defendant died pending suit in the federal court, and his administrators were made defendants, and a judgment was recovered against them, they cannot evade the payment of that judgment, with assets in their hands, by showing proceedings in a probate court which settled up the estate, without reference to plaintiff's judgment or claim.

THIS was an appeal from the district court for the northern district of Mississippi, and the case is very fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Coxe*, for appellants.

*Mr. Stanton*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 504 ]

This is an appeal from the district court for the northern district of Mississippi.

The appellants filed a bill in December on the equity side of the district court against the appellees.

“The bill charges that in November, 1846, the bank instituted a suit on the law side of the same district court against William Jolly, as indorser of a bill of exchange held by plaintiffs. Jolly appeared to the suit, and filed his plea. He died in March, 1847, and appellees were appointed his administrators by the Panola court of probate, in Mississippi. The suit against Jolly was revived against his administrators, the appellees, and in June, 1851, the same came on for trial on the issue joined on the single plea of *non assumpsit*, and a judgment was rendered in favor of plaintiff for \$5,041.33 with costs. Upon this judgment execution was issued, which was returned by the marshal *nulla bona*. The judgment remains wholly unpaid, and there is no visible property in the hands of the administrators upon which a levy could be made.

The bill proceeds to charge, that pending the said suit against the administrators in April, 1848, they represented to the said probate court of Panola county, that the estate of their intestate

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was insolvent, and procured a declaration to be made by said court to that effect, whereas the bill charges that said estate was not and is not insolvent, and that the assets in the hands of the administrators are more than sufficient to pay all the liabilities of the estate. That the administrators have converted the assets into cash to the amount of upwards of \$20,000, and have fully paid all the debts of intestate, with the single exception of that due to complainant. The debts they have paid amount to about \$11,000, and the administrators have upwards of \$9,000 in cash or available assets belonging to the estate, which is not required for the payment of any other debt, but refuse to apply any part [ \* 505 ] thereof to the payment of \* complainant's debt, and will shortly pay the same over to the heirs at law of Jolly, unless prevented by the interposition of the court.

The defendants pretend that complainants have no right to require payment of their judgment out of said assets, because they have not established the claims upon which the judgment is founded before the probate court of Panola county, and had the same allowed by said court, but complainants are advised and insist that such allowance by said probate court is not necessary.

Sundry special interrogatories are appended to the bill.

In June, 1852, defendants filed their answer. The principal averments in the bill are admitted—it is admitted that they have received assets to the amount of \$20,000; that they have paid all the debts which have been legally established against the estate to the amount of more than \$13,000, and have in their hands assets to the value of \$6,500, and that if complainant's claim is disallowed, the estate will be worth to the heirs about \$6,000. They are advised that complainant's judgment is barred, and if they were to pay it, they would pay it in their own wrong.

They deny that they did illegally or fraudulently procure the estate to be declared insolvent. When they took charge of the estate as administrators, it was appraised at \$10,090.76½, and debts or claims against it were brought to the notice of respondents \$18,597.40. Respondents, looking to probable results, believed it might prove and would probably prove insolvent; under these circumstances they procured the declaration. The clerk was appointed commissioner of insolvency, and publication was made for the period of twelve months, warning all creditors of Jolly to present their claims to the commissioner for allowance. In April, 1849, the commissioner made his report, and an order was passed requiring all persons interested to appear and except to the report at July term, 1849—at July term respondents alone excepted to

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the report, they excepted to two claims which had been allowed, one of these claims was allowed, the other disallowed; and in October term, 1849, the report was approved and confirmed—p. 8. Respondents append a transcript to these proceedings, and rely upon the same as a bar to complainant's claim."

To the answer of the defendants a general replication was filed, and, on the hearing of the cause, the court decreed a dismissal of the complainant's bill.

In the argument of the case in this court, the counsel of the defendants urged the following grounds against the right of the complainants to recover.

"If the complainant's demand is not barred by their failure to \* present it in the probate court, their remedy [ \* 506 ] is at law, and not in equity. The defendants admit that they have \$6,000 in their hands belonging to the estate of their intestate. If they are bound to pay this to the complainants, and refuse to do so, they are guilty of a *devastavit*, and are liable to an action on their bond. In their answer they expressly deny that complainant (the bank) has made out a cause entitling it to relief in the premises, and that this court has jurisdiction thereof.

"But the complainants are entitled to no relief, either in equity or at law.

"The defendants cannot be prejudiced by suffering judgment to go against them on the plea of *non assumpsit*. Hutchison's Code, 657, § 57. Hemphill v. Fortner, 11 Sm. & Mar. 344.

"The decrees of probate courts, in case of estates reported insolvent, cannot be questioned or set aside, unless by a regular appeal taken, or on account of fraud. Hutchison's Code, 667, 668, 673, 683, 684. Chewning v. Peck, 6 How. Mi. Rep. 524; Smith v. Berry, 1 Sm. & Mar. 321; Addison v. Eldridge, 1 Ib. 510; Herrings v. Wellons, 5 Ib. 354; Dalgren v. Duncan *et al.*, 7 Ib. 280.

"Insolvency may be declared when the debts appear to be greater than the probable value of all the real and personal property. The court has a discretion, which, when exercised, is conclusive, unless a direct appeal be taken. Saunders's Adm'r v. Planters' Bank, 2 Sm. & Mar. 304.

"As to the responsibility of an administrator who pays debts, when the estate subsequently becomes insolvent, see Woodward v. Fisher *et al.*, 11 Sm. & Mar. 304; Bramblet v. Webb *et al.*, 11 Ib. 438.

"Creditors whose claims have not been presented to the commissioner, are forever barred, even when the estate proves not to be



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insolvent. *Allen and Apperson v. Keith and Vaiden*, 26 Miss. Rep. 232; *Anderson v. Tindall*, 26 Miss. Rep. 332.

“The creditor must present his claim to the commissioner of insolvency, though he have a suit pending against the administrator. *Trezevant et al. v. McQueen*, 13 Sm. & Mar. 311.

“And when a commission of insolvency has been regularly opened and closed, it will not be reopened, even at the instance of a judgment creditor, whose judgment bears date since the closing of the commission. *Harrison v. Motz et al.*, 5 Sm. & Mar. 578.

“The foregoing authorities must be deemed conclusive against the appellants, unless the rendition of a judgment by a federal court can be held to take away from the probate courts their exclusive jurisdiction, in the administration of the assets of deceased insolvents. But there can be no doubt that the [ \* 507 ] \* laws of the State, from which the executor or administrator derives his authority to act, must prevail, as well in the federal as in the State tribunals. Citizens of other States, possibly, cannot be prevented from suing in the federal courts in order to establish their demands; yet the effect of the judgment, its lien, or other operation upon the assets of the deceased, must be absolutely controlled by the local law; otherwise the conflict of jurisdictions would be irreconcilable and disastrous. And such, it is believed, is the well-established doctrine of this and all other courts. *Story's Conflict of Laws*, 3d ed. § 521; *Williams v. Benedict*, 8 How. Sup. C. R. 107; *McGill v. Armour*, 11 How. Sup. C. R. 142.”

But we do not deem it necessary to discuss them in detail, for the law of a State limiting the remedies of its citizens in its own courts, cannot be applied to prevent the citizens of other States from suing in the courts of the United States in that State for the recovery of any property or money there, to which they may be legally or equitably entitled. The principle was fully discussed, and decided by this court in the case of *Suydam v. Brodnax and others*, 14 Pet. 67. We refer to the reasoning in support of it given in that case without repeating it, or thinking it necessary to add anything on this occasion. It concludes this case.

And it is our opinion, under the circumstances and the testimony in this case, that the surplus in the hands of the defendants must be applied to the payment of the judgment of the complainant in preference to any claim which has been asserted to it for the heirs at law or distributees of the intestate, Jolly. We reverse the decree of the court below, and shall remand the case with

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directions to that court for further proceedings in conformity with this opinion.

CHARLES McMICKEN, Appellant, v. FRANKLIN PERIN.

18 H. 507.

18h 507
L-ed 504
138 467

ILLEGALITY OF CONTRACT BETWEEN ATTORNEY AND CLIENT—PRACTICE AS TO EXCEPTIONS TO MASTER'S REPORT, AND SETTING ASIDE DECREE IN CIRCUIT COURTS.

1. It is not unlawful for an attorney to purchase of his client the subject of the litigation after a final judgment in the case.
2. If it were, a party who loans the money to him to make the purchase, and in whose name the purchase is made, cannot rely on it to defeat the trust in his hands for the benefit of the attorney. *Brooks v. Martin*, 2 Wallace, 70.
3. This court will not review a master's report upon objections taken here for the first time, nor does an appeal lie from a refusal of the circuit court to open a decree once rendered.
4. Circuit courts have no power to set aside, on motion their decrees, after the term at which they were rendered. *Cameron v. McRoberts*, 3 Wheaton, 591.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and the case is well stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Henderson*, for appellant.

*Mr. Smiley*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court. [\* 508]

The appellee (Perin) filed his bill in the circuit court, alleging that he had been employed to institute suits in the courts of Louisiana, on behalf of certain persons claiming to be the heirs of James Fletcher, for which service he was to receive fifty per cent. on the money value, or a fee equal to one half the net value of the property, real or personal, in controversy. Pending the suits his clients offered to sell their interest to him for \$5,000, or to other persons for \$10,000. There were some negotiations upon this subject, but nothing seems to have been concluded until after the final judgment had been rendered; after that time, the bill proceeds to state as follows:

“That, upon the said proposition being renewed, the complainant addressed divers letters to the defendant, asking for a loan of \$5,000 for the purpose of purchasing the said interest of the Fletchers in and to the said property; and that, in reply to the complainant's said letters, the defendant answered in writing, giving a promise of said loan,” as will appear by the exhibits C and D; one of which was written by the defendant on the 8th of Sep-

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tember, 1848, nearly three months after the judgment for the land had become final and executory.

“And your orator further shows unto your honors that, relying on the promises and the honesty of the defendant, and upon the understanding and agreement with him, the complainant [ \* 509 ] purchased the said property of the said Fletcher, on \* the 19th of October, 1848, while the defendant was absent in Cincinnati; and in order to secure the said McMicken in the loan of the said \$5,000, the complainant caused the title of the said property to be made out in the name of the defendant, with the express condition that the purchase was made in the name of the defendant for the use and benefit of the complainant, all of which will appear by reference to the act of sale, marked exhibit F; to the letter of the complainant to the defendant, dated on the 19th of October, 1848, accompanying a copy of the act of sale sent to the defendant, marked exhibit G, and other proofs to be hereafter exhibited. The said defendant accepted the said sale, &c., took the said property, &c., and held the same in trust for the use of complainant, and upon no other condition or understanding, subject only to the repayment of the money advanced for the purchase thereof.”

The bill avers that the plaintiff being thus invested with all the legal and equitable rights of the heirs of Fletcher, he tendered to the defendant (McMicken) immediately after his ratification of the sale, the sum of five thousand and fifty dollars, with the proper interest due thereon, and demanded a conveyance of all the said property and rights so purchased and held in trust, which the defendant refused.

The bill charges certain fraudulent pretexts on the part of McMicken for withholding the deed according to his agreement, denies their validity, and affirms that the plaintiff has been forced into a court of chancery in consequence of the repeated refusals of the defendant to deliver up his property and convey the same to him.

The bill prays that the defendant may, by the order and decree of the court, be required to convey the said property to the plaintiff upon the payment or tender to the said defendant the amount of his advances, and for general relief.

A decree *pro confesso* was entered at the spring term of the circuit court 1853, and at the same term of the court in 1854 a decree was rendered requiring the defendant to convey the property specified in the bill to the plaintiff, upon the payment to the said defendant of the debt reported to be due within six months after the date of the decree.

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It is objected in this court that the arrangement between the heirs of Fletcher and his attorney, (Perin,) by which the latter became the purchaser of their interest in the subject of the litigation he had been conducting in their behalf, was illegal, and he could take no benefit from his contract. The articles of the code of Louisiana affecting this question are as follows: art. 2623, "a right is said to be litigious whenever there exists a suit and contestation about the same;" art. 3522, No. 22, \* "liti- [ \* 510 ] gious rights are those which cannot be exercised without undergoing a lawsuit;" art. 2624, "public officers connected with courts of justice, such as judges, advocates, attorneys, clerks, and sheriffs, cannot purchase litigious rights which fall under the jurisdiction of the tribunal in which they exercise their functions, under penalty of nullity and of having to defray all costs, damages, and interest."

The courts of Louisiana have decided "that where a judgment has been rendered litigation has ceased." *Marshall v. McRae*, 2 Ann. 79. And when the thing ceded is not contested and is not the subject of a suit at the time of cession, the thing is not litigious. *Provost v. Johnson*, 9 Mart. 184. The bill charges that the purchase was made after a final judgment had been rendered, declaring the property to belong to the heirs of Fletcher. The subject of the sale was ascertained, the title recognized, and consequently none of the mischiefs which occasioned these articles could then follow. Such is the conclusion of the commentators and courts of France upon the corresponding articles in the code Napoleon. *Trop. de Vente*, § 201; 39 Dall. part 2, 196.

But upon well-established principles the appellant is estopped from contesting the title of the appellee. The case made is that the appellee borrowed of the appellant a sum of money to complete his purchase, and that the title was placed in the name of the appellant to secure the repayment of that advance. The latter cannot be heard to object that there was illegality in the contract between Fletcher's heirs and the appellee, nor to appropriate to himself the fruit of that contract. The contract between the appellee and appellant is uninfected by any illegality.

The consideration was a loan of money upon a security. The contract between Fletcher's heirs and the appellee is completed and closed, and will not be disturbed by anything which the court may decree in this case. *McBlair v. Gibbes*, 17 How. 232.

The appellant further objects that his debt was not accurately ascertained by the master upon the decree of reference. In *Story v. Livingston*, 13 Pet. 359, this court decided that no objections to

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a master's report can be made which were not taken before the master; the object being to save time, and to give him an opportunity to correct his errors and reconsider his opinion. And in *Heyn v. Heyn*, 4 Jacob. 47, it was decided that after a decree *pro confesso*, the defendant is not at liberty to go before the master without a special order, but the accounts are to be taken *ex parte*. This court will not review a master's report upon objections taken here for the first time.

[ \* 511 ] \* Our conclusion is, there is no error in the final decree, rendered in the circuit court.

At a subsequent term, the appellant filed a petition in the circuit court, alleging that he had been deceived by the appellee in reference to the prosecution of the bill, and had consequently failed to make any appearance or answer, and that he had a meritorious defense.

He prayed the court to set aside the decree, and to allow him to file an answer to the bill. This petition was dismissed. We concur in the judgment of the circuit court as to the propriety of this course. This court, in *Brockett v. Brockett*, 2 How. 238, determined that an appeal would not lie from the refusal of a court to open a former decree, though the petition in that case was filed during the term at which the decree was entered. In *Cameron v. McRoberts*, 3 Wheat. 591, it decided that the circuit courts have no power to set aside their decrees in equity on motion after the term at which they were rendered.

These decisions are conclusive of the questions raised upon the order dismissing the petition.

The decrees of the circuit court are affirmed, with costs.

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JOSHUA MAXWELL and another, Plaintiffs in Error, v. ALEXANDER H. NEWBOLD and others.

18 H. 511.

JURISDICTION UNDER 25TH SECTION OF THE JUDICIARY ACT.

1. To bring one of the questions mentioned in the 25th section of the judiciary act before this court, it is not sufficient to raise the objection here, and to show that it was involved in the controversy in the State court, and might have been considered by it when making its decision. It must appear on the face of the record that it was in fact raised, and that the judicial mind was exercised upon it, and the decision was against the right claimed under it. *The Victory*, 6 Wallace, 382; *Railroad Co. v. Rock*, 4 Wallace, 177.
2. The fact that the effect of a judgment in one State, and a sale under it, in defeating liens on the same property in another State, was raised, does not show that the court

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was called upon to consider the constitutional provision and the act of congress concerning the faith and credit due from the courts of one State to the judicial records of another State.

THIS was a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Michigan, and the only question considered was that of the jurisdiction of this court under the 25th section of the judiciary act. The manner in which the point arises is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Lawrence* and *Mr. Haven*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for defendants.

\* Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the [ \* 512 ] court.

This case comes before the court upon a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Michigan.

The facts in the case, so far as they are material to the decision of this court, are as follows :

The steamboat *Globe* was built in the State of Michigan, and by the laws of that State the persons who furnish materials for her construction had a lien upon her, and had a right to enforce their claims by a proceeding *in rem* against the vessel. Before these claims were discharged she was removed to Cleveland, in the State of Ohio, where she received her machinery and was fitted out ; and for the debts thus incurred the Ohio creditors, like those in Michigan, had a lien on the vessel, and were authorized to proceed against her by attachment and seizure.

Afterwards, when the steamboat was in the port of Cleveland, the Ohio creditors obtained process against her, and she was seized, condemned, and sold, according to the laws of that State, to satisfy these liens. A certain E. S. Sterling became the purchaser at this sale, and afterwards sold her to Maxwell, one of the plaintiffs in error.

After these proceedings, the steamboat returned to Michigan, and was there seized by virtue of the prior lien created by the laws of that State, as above mentioned. The party at whose instance and for whose benefit the proceeding was instituted under the Michigan lien, had filed his claim in the previous proceedings in Ohio, but was permitted by the court to withdraw it without prejudice.

The plaintiffs in error, who were the owners, or had an interest in the steamboat, appeared in the Michigan court to defend her against this claim. And the principal ground of defense appears to have been, that the sale in Ohio was not made subject to the prior liens in Michigan ; that it was an absolute and unconditional



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sale, made by competent judicial authority, and vested the property in the purchaser, free and discharged from all previous liens and incumbrances.

The record contains the pleadings, evidence, and admissions of the parties in relation to these transactions, and the proceedings in the State courts. But it is unnecessary to state them at large, as the above summary is sufficient to show the matter in controversy in the State courts, and how the questions raised in the State courts were brought before them.

At the trial in the circuit court of Michigan, the defendants [ \* 513 ] in error, who were plaintiffs in that court, prayed the court to give the following instructions to the jury:

“1. That if the jury should find from the evidence adduced in this cause, that the steamboat *Globe*, mentioned in the declaration, has been constructed and built in this State, and was used in navigating the waters thereof, and that the debt, claim, or demand, for which she was attached by the plaintiffs, has been contracted in this State by the owners, joint owner, or agent thereof, on account of supplies furnished by said plaintiff for the use of said boat, or on account of work done, or materials furnished by said plaintiffs in or about the building, fitting, furnishing, or equipping of said boat in said State; that then said plaintiff acquired and had a lien on said boat for said debt, claim, or demand, under and by virtue of the law of this State.

“2. That if the jury should be of the opinion, from said evidence, that said claim or demand of said plaintiff constituted a lien on said boat, which had been acquired as aforesaid, and that the contracting parties were then citizens of this State, then that such lien had not been displaced or affected by the legal proceedings resorted to in the court of Ohio, exemplifications of which were introduced in evidence by the defendants; that if any title was acquired under the same, or the laws of Ohio, such title is subordinate to the lien acquired by the plaintiff in this State, by virtue of the laws thereof; that such proceedings do not constitute a valid defense to this action, and that said boat, on coming within the jurisdiction of this court, was subject to be attached for said claim.”

And the plaintiffs in error asked for the following instructions on their part:

“1. That the facts contained in the notice of defendants, and which are admitted as true by the plaintiffs, constitute in law a defense to the plaintiffs' action. 2. That the sale under the laws of Ohio, if fair and *bona fide*, constitutes a defense to a purchaser

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under such laws to a prosecution by a creditor under the laws of this State, such as the plaintiffs in this case have shown themselves to be. 3. That defendant Maxwell's title is good against the lien or claim of the plaintiff Wright in this cause, even if that of Sterling was not. 4. That the filing of the plaintiff's claim in the Ohio court precludes him from raising the objection that such court had no jurisdiction of his rights so as to divest his lien by a sale in that State. 5. That a lien under the statutes of this State, though valid in its inception, cannot be enforced against a purchaser in good faith under a sale under the laws of the State of Ohio, so given in evidence."

Whereupon the court gave the instructions asked for by the \* defendants in error, and refused those requested by [ \* 514 ] the plaintiffs, who, thereupon, excepted to these opinions, and the verdict and judgment in that court being against them, they removed the case to the supreme court of the State, and assigned there the following errors, for which they prayed that the judgment of the circuit court might be reversed:

"1. The court erred in charging the jury, as requested by the plaintiffs below, and upon the points and to the effect stated more fully in the bill of exceptions filed herein, and to which reference is hereby had.

"2. The court erred in refusing to charge the jury, as requested by the defendants below, upon the points and to the effect stated in the bill of exceptions filed herein, and to which, for fuller particularity, reference is hereby had.

"3. The charge of the court, the verdict of the jury, and the judgment below, are each against and in conflict with the constitution and laws of the United States, and therefore erroneous.

"4. By the record aforesaid, it appears that the judgment was given against the plaintiffs in error, whereas, by the law of the land, the said judgment should have been in favor of the plaintiffs in error, and against the defendants in error."

But the supreme court, it appears, concurred in opinion with the circuit court and affirmed its judgment; and the plaintiffs in error have now brought the case before this court by writ of error, and have assigned here the following errors:

"1. By the record aforesaid it appears that judgment was given against the plaintiffs in error; whereas, by the law of the land, and under the evidence appearing in the bill of exceptions, the judgment should have been rendered in favor of the plaintiffs in error.

"2. There was drawn in question in this suit, as appears by

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the said record, a statute of the United States; and the decision and judgment of the said supreme court of the State of Michigan was against the validity of such statute.

“3. The said supreme court of the State of Michigan erred in deciding that the said proceedings, judgment, and sale had in the State of Ohio was not a bar to the claim prosecuted in this suit.

“4. The said supreme court erred, in that it did not give to the said records of judicial proceedings and sale of the steamboat *Globe*, had in the State of Ohio, the same faith and credit as they have by law in the said State of Ohio.”

Upon these proceedings, as they appear in the record before us, the first question to be considered is, whether any point appears to have been decided in the supreme court of the State, which will

authorize this court to affirm or reverse its judgment,  
[\* 515] \* under the 25th section of the act of congress of 1789.

The error alleged here is that it did not give to the records of the judicial proceedings and sale of the steamboat, had in Ohio, the same faith and credit that they have by law in that State. But to bring that question for decision in this court, it is not sufficient to raise the objection here, and to show that it was involved in the controversy in the State court, and might, and ought, to have been considered by it when making its decision. It must appear on the face of the record that it was in fact raised; that the judicial mind of the court was exercised upon it; and their decision against the right claimed under it.

It is true, that in some of the earlier cases, when writs of error to State courts were comparatively new in this court, a broader and more comprehensive rule was sometimes recognized. And in the case of *Miller v. Nicholls*, 4 Wheat. 311, it was said to be sufficient, to give jurisdiction, that an act of congress was applicable to the case. But experience showed that this rule was not a safe one; and that it might sometimes happen, that although in one view of the subject an act of congress or a clause of the constitution might be applicable to a case, yet the State court, upon a different view of the case, might have decided upon principles of State law altogether independent of any provision in the constitution or laws of the United States, and in nowise in conflict with either. And if this court reversed the judgment, upon the assumption that a right claimed under the constitution or laws of the United States, and to which the party was entitled, had been denied to him, the reversal would sometimes be for a supposed error which the State court had not committed, and upon a point which the State court had not decided. Other cases might be referred to, in which expressions

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are used in the opinion of the court that might seem in some measure to sanction the doctrine in *Miller v. Nicholls*; but the general current of the decisions, from the earliest period of the court, will be found to maintain the rule which we have hereinbefore stated. And as this want of harmony in the decisions and language of the court was calculated to mislead and embarrass counsel in the prosecution of writs of error to State courts, this court, at the January term of 1836, when the subject was again brought before it, in the case of *Crowell v. Randall*, 10 Pet. 368, determined to give the subject a careful and deliberate examination, in order to remove any doubts which might have arisen from previous decisions. Accordingly, all of the preceding cases are reviewed and commented on in the opinion delivered by the court in that case, and the doctrine clearly announced, that, in order to give jurisdiction to this court, it must appear by the record that one of \*the [ \* 516 ] questions stated in the 25th section of the act of 1789 did arise, and was decided in the State court; and that it was not sufficient that it might have arisen or been applicable—it must appear that it did arise and was applied. This rule has been uniformly adhered to since the decision of that case. We think it the true one, and the only one, consistent with the spirit and language of the section referred to, which so carefully and plainly limits the authority which it confers upon this court over the judgments of State tribunals.

Applying this principle to the case before us, the writ of error cannot be maintained. The questions raised and decided in the State circuit court, point altogether for their solution to the laws of the State, and make no reference whatever to the constitution or laws of the United States. Undoubtedly, this did not preclude the plaintiffs in error from raising the point in the supreme court of the State, if it was involved in the case as presented to that court. And whether a writ of error from this court will lie or not, depends upon the questions raised and decided in that court. But neither of the questions made there by the errors assigned refer in any manner to the constitution or laws of the United States, except the third, and the language of that is too general and indefinite to come within the provisions of the act of congress, or the decisions of this court. It alleges that the charge of the court was against, and in conflict with, the constitution and laws of the United States. But what right did he claim under the constitution of the United States which was denied him by the State court? Under what clause of the constitution did he make his claim? And what right did he claim under an act of congress? And under what act,

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in the wide range of our statutes, did he claim it? The record does not show—nor can this court undertake to determine that the question as to the faith and credit due to the record and judicial proceedings in Ohio, was made or determined in the State court, or that that court ever gave any opinion on the question. For aught that appears in the record, some other clause in the constitution, or some law of congress may have been relied on, and the mind of the court never called to the clause of the constitution now assigned as error in this court.

This case cannot be distinguished from the case of *Lawler v. Walker* and others, 14 How. 149. In that case the State court certified that there was drawn in question the validity of statutes of the State of Ohio, &c., without saying what statutes. And in the opinion of this court dismissing the case for want of jurisdiction, they say: “The statutes complained of this case should have been stated; without that, the court cannot apply them to the subject-matter of litigation to determine whether or [ \* 517 ] \* not they violated the constitution of the United States.”

So in the case before us, the clause in the constitution and the law of congress should have been specified by the plaintiffs in error in the State court, in order that this court might see what was the right claimed by them, and whether it was denied to them by the decision of the State court.

Upon these grounds we think this writ of error cannot be maintained, and therefore dismiss it for want of jurisdiction.

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18h 517  
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MATTHEW WATSON, Plaintiff in Error, v. COLIN S. TARPLEY.

18 H. 517.

BILLS OF EXCHANGE—RIGHT OF ACTION AFTER PROTEST FOR NON-ACCEPTANCE—EFFECT OF STATE STATUTES ON THE RIGHT.

1. By the general commercial law, a right of action on a bill of exchange accrues against the indorser on protest and notice of non-acceptance, though payable at a time long subsequent.
2. This right cannot be defeated as against the citizen of another State who sues in a court of the United States, by a statute of the State where the *indorser* resides and is sued.
3. The facts of the demand and notice being undisputed, it is for the court, and not for the jury, to determine their sufficiency in law to fix the liability of the indorser.

WRIT of error to circuit court for southern district of Mississippi.  
The case is stated in the opinion.

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*Mr. Badger*, for plaintiff in error.

No counsel for defendant.

Mr. Justice DANIEL delivered the opinion of the court.

On the 29th April, 1850, the plaintiff in error, a citizen of Tennessee, brought this action of *assumpsit* against the defendant, a citizen of Mississippi, in the circuit court of the United States for the southern district of Mississippi, upon a bill of exchange, dated 4th April, 1850, drawn by the defendant upon Messrs. McKee, Bulkely, and Co., of New Orleans, Louisiana, for \$2,327.49, payable twelve months after date, in favor of James Rankhead, and by him indorsed to the plaintiff, and declared in two counts—one on the non-acceptance and the other on the non-payment of the said bill. Pr. Rec. p. 4. The defendant pleaded “*non assumpsit*,” and on this plea issue was joined, (page six,) and the action tried on the 11th of January, 1855, \*when a verdict was [ \* 518 ] found for the defendant. On the trial, a bill of exceptions was taken by the plaintiff in error, from which it appears that the plaintiff read in evidence the bill of exchange, and proved the presentment thereof to the drawers, at their office in New Orleans, for acceptance on the 27th of April, 1850, the due protest thereof for non-acceptance, and a notification of its dishonor given the same day by letter addressed to the defendant at his residence in Mississippi. See notarial protest and depositions, 17–22.

The plaintiff also proved the presentment of the said bill for payment on the 7th April, 1851, the refusal of payment, the due protest thereof, and notice to the defendant. See notarial protest and depositions of H. B. Cenas, A. Commandeur, and Charles F. Barry, 7–15.

The defendant then offered to read in evidence a certificate, set out on the 23d page of the Record; and which being read, after objection taken thereto by the plaintiff, the judge instructed the jury. Record, 23.

“That the plaintiff was not entitled to recover on the count in the declaration on the protest of the bill for non-acceptance, unless due and regular notice was proved of the protest of the bill for non-payment, though the jury might be satisfied from the proof, that the bill had been regularly protested for non-acceptance, and due notice thereof given to the defendant; that, to entitle the plaintiff to recover, notwithstanding the proof of protest for non-acceptance and due notice thereof, the plaintiff must prove protest for non-payment and due notice thereof, to the defendant; and that the



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jury were the judges of the testimony, and could give to the witnesses such credit as they thought them entitled to, looking to all the circumstances of the case."

The material questions involved in this case are comprised within a comparatively narrow compass, and present themselves prominently out upon the face of the record. On each of the questions thus deemed material, we think that the circuit court has erred.

Upon the relevancy or effect of the certificate of H. B. Cenas, under date of the 7th of April, 1851, and which was under an exception by the plaintiff permitted to be read in evidence with the view of impairing the previous statement of this witness as to the regularity of his proceedings upon the dishonor of the bill, we do not think it necessary to express an opinion. Our views of the law of this case as applicable to the instruction given by the circuit court, are in no degree affected by the character of the statements in that certificate.

We think that the instruction of the court was erroneous [ \* 519 ] ous in \*committing it to the jury to determine whether the proceedings as to protest and notice upon the dishonor of the bill for non-payment were regular and legal. This is a matter which must, upon the facts given in evidence, be determined by the court as a question of law, and which cannot be regularly submitted to the jury. Such is the doctrine uniformly ruled by this court; we mention the cases of the *Bank of Columbia v. Lawrence*, 1 Pet. 578; *Dickins v. Beale*, Ib. 572; *Rhett v. Poe*, 2 How. 457; *Camden v. Doremus et al.*, 3 Ib. 515; *Harris v. Robinson*, 4 Ib. 336; *Lambert v. Ghiselin*, 9 Ib. 552. To the same point might be cited the several English decisions referred to in the case of *Rhett v. Poe*, already mentioned.

We also hold to be erroneous the instruction of the court declaring that after presentment of the bill for acceptance, and after regular protest and notice for non-acceptance, an action could not be maintained by the payee or indorsee until after the maturity of the bill, and then only upon proof of demand for payment, and of a regular protest and notice founded upon the refusal to pay.

It is a rule of commercial law too familiarly known to require the citation of authorities, or to admit of question, that the payee or indorsee of a bill, upon its presentment and upon refusal by the drawee to accept, has the right to immediate recourse against the drawer. Upon no principle of reason or justice can he be required to await the maturity of the bill, by the dishonor of which he has been assured that it will not be paid, and with which the drawee has disclaimed all connection. Justice to the drawer, with the

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view of enabling him to guard himself from injury, imposes upon the holder the obligation of protest and notice upon non-acceptance; but beyond this, he sustains no connection with the drawee of the bill, and is under no obligation afterwards to present the latter for payment; of course, he cannot be rightfully held to protest and notice for non-payment.

In the several compilations of the law of bills and notes by Kyd, Bayley, Chitty, Byles, and Story, are collected the decisions by which this doctrine has been settled.

It has been suggested that the instruction by the judge at circuit may have been founded upon a provision in a statute of the State of Mississippi of 1836, contained in a collection of the laws of that State by Howard and Hutchinson, pp. 375, 376, § 18, by which, amongst other enactments, it is declared that "no action or suit shall be sustained or commenced on any bill of exchange, until after the maturity thereof;" and this prohibition or postponement of the right of action it is thought may have been interpreted by the judge as requiring after presentment for \*ac- [ \* 520 ] ceptance, and, after protest and notice upon non-acceptance, a like presentment and demand for payment upon the maturity of the bill; and upon refusal to pay, a like protest and notice in order to authorize a recovery.

The answer to the above suggestion is this: that if such be a just interpretation of the statute of Mississippi, that interpretation, and the consequences deducible therefrom, we must regard as wholly inadmissible.

Whilst it will not be denied, that the laws of the several States are of binding authority upon their domestic tribunals, and upon persons and property within their appropriate jurisdiction, it is equally clear that those laws cannot affect, either by enlargement or diminution, the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States as vested and prescribed by the constitution and laws of the United States, nor destroy or control the rights of parties litigant to whom the right of resort to these courts has been secured by the laws and constitution. This is a position which has been frequently affirmed by this court, and would seem to compel the general assent upon its simple enunciation.

In the case of *Swift v. Tyson*, 16 Pet. 1, this court, in giving a construction to the 34th section of the judiciary act, which declares "that the laws of the several States, except where the constitution, treaties, or statutes of the United States shall otherwise require or provide, shall be regarded as rules of decision in trials at common law in the courts of the United States, in cases where they apply,"

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has said: "It never has been supposed by us, that this section did apply, or was intended to apply, to questions of a more general nature, not at all dependent upon local statutes or local usages of a fixed and permanent operation; as, for example, to the construction of ordinary contracts or other written instruments, and especially to questions of general commercial law, where the State tribunals are called upon to perform the like functions as ourselves; that is, to ascertain upon general reasoning and legal analogies, what is the true exposition of the contract, or what is the just rule furnished by the principles of commercial law to govern the case." Again, in the same case it is said by this court: "The law respecting negotiable instruments may be truly declared, in the language of Cicero, adopted by Lord Mansfield in *Luke v. Lyde*, 2 Burr, 883, 887, to be in a great measure not the law of a single country only, but of the commercial world."

In the cases of *Keary v. The Farmers and Merchants of Memphis*, 16 Pet. 89, and of *Dromgoole v. The Farmers' Bank*, 2 How. 241, it was ruled by this court, that the courts of the United States themselves can have no authority to adopt any provisions [ \* 521 ] of State laws which are repugnant to or incompatible \* with the positive enactments of congress, upon the jurisdiction, or practice, or proceedings of such courts.

The general commercial law being circumscribed within no local limits, nor committed for its administration to any peculiar jurisdiction, and the constitution and laws of the United States having conferred upon the citizens of the several States, and upon aliens, the power or privilege of litigation and enforcing their rights acquired under and defined by that general commercial law, before the judicial tribunals of the United States, it must follow by regular consequence, that any State law or regulation, the effect of which would be to impair the rights thus secured, or to divest the federal courts of cognizance thereof, in their fullest acceptation under the commercial law, must be nugatory and unavailing. The statute of Mississippi, so far as it may be understood to deny, or in any degree to impair the right of a non-resident holder of a bill of exchange, immediately after presentment to, and refusal to accept by the drawee, and after protest and notice, to resort forthwith to the courts of the United States by suit upon such bill, must be regarded as wholly without authority and inoperative. The same want of authority may be affirmed of a provision in the statute which would seek to render the right of recovery by the holder, after regular presentment and protest, and notice for non-acceptance, dependent upon proof of subsequent presentment, protest, and notice for non-payment.

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A requisition like this would be a violation of the general commercial law, which a State would have no power to impose, and which the courts of the United States would be bound to disregard.

We think that the instruction given by the circuit court in this case was erroneous; that its decision should be, as it is hereby reversed; and the cause is remanded to the circuit court, to be proceeded in upon a *venire de novo*, in conformity with the principles above ruled.

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WILLIAM STAIRS and another, Plaintiffs, v. CHARLES H. PEASLEE.

18 H. 521.

TARIFF OF 1846—VALUE OF IMPORTS, HOW DETERMINED—PENALTY FOR UNDER-VALUATION.

1. Under the tariff act of 1846, where goods were imported from countries other than that of their production or manufacture, their dutiable value was to be determined by that of the principal markets of the country from which they were imported into the United States.
2. The word country here includes all of the dominions of a state like Great Britain; and the decisions of the appraiser, that the principal markets of that country for a particular class of goods are London and Liverpool, are valid, though the importation was directly from Halifax.
3. Where, on such appraisement legally made, it appears that the value was more than ten per cent. above the value at which they were entered by the importer, the penalty of twenty per cent. upon the value attaches, whether they are entered at the invoice value, or at a greater or less value than stated by the importer.

THE case came to the supreme court on a certificate of division of opinion of the judges of the circuit court for the district of Massachusetts, as to three points of law, arising out of the tariff acts, which are stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Griswold*, for plaintiffs.

*Mr. Gillett*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the [ \* 524 ] court.

This case comes before the court upon a certificate of division in opinion between the judges of the circuit court of the United States for the district of Massachusetts.

It is an action for money had and received, brought by the plaintiffs, who are merchants, resident and doing business at Halifax, Nova Scotia, to recover of the defendant, the collector of customs

18h 521  
L-ed 474  
36f 889

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for the port of Boston, money alleged to have been illegally exacted on payment of duties on fifty bags of catch, shipped by the plaintiffs at Halifax, consigned to Messrs. Clark, Janes, and Co., of Boston.

The invoice was dated at Halifax, November 10, 1853, and the catch was entered at the custom-house, Boston, on the 16th of the same month, at the invoice value.

The value of the catch, as appraised by the United States appraisers, exceeded by ten per centum the invoice value; and the plaintiffs appealed, and a reappraisement was had by two merchant's appraisers, and their appraisement also exceeded by ten per centum the invoice value; whereupon the defendant assessed a duty of ten per centum *ad valorem* on the appraised value, and also an additional duty or penalty of twenty per centum on the same value,

under the 8th section of the tariff act of July 30, 1846.

[ \* 525 ] \* It was proved that the catch was the product of the

East Indies only, and that Calcutta was the great market of the country of production. And it appeared on the trial that this fact was known to the appraisers when the appraisement was made. It was also proved that London and Liverpool were the principal markets of Great Britain, exclusive of India, for said article; and, so far as appeared at the trial, this cargo was the only one known to have been sold in, or exported from, Halifax.

It was also proved that the appraisers appraised the catch at its market value in London and Liverpool, and not at Halifax or Calcutta, at the period of its exportation from the port of Halifax to the United States.

The case coming on to be tried, it occurred as a question:

1. Whether the tariff act of March 3, 1851, repealed so much of all former laws as provided that merchandisc, when imported from a country other than that of production or manufacture, should be appraised at the market value of similar articles at the principal markets of the country of production or manufacture, at the period of the exportation to the United States.

On which question the opinions of the judges were opposed.

2. Whether, in estimating the dutiable value of the catch, the appraisers should have taken the value at the market of Calcutta, or London and Liverpool, or Halifax, at the period of the exportation from Halifax.

On which question the opinions of the judges were also opposed.

3. Whether, if the appraisements were legally made, the additional duty of twenty per centum, under the 8th section of the tariff act of July 30, 1846, was rightfully exacted by the defendant.

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On which question the opinions of the judges were opposed.

Wherefore, upon the motion of the plaintiffs, the points were certified to this court for final decision.

The first question certified by the circuit court depends altogether upon the construction of the act of 1851, 9 Stats. at Large, 629.

The language of this act of Congress is general, and embraces all importations of goods that are subject to an *ad valorem* duty; and directs that their value shall be estimated and ascertained by the wholesale price at the period of exportation to the United States, in the principal markets of the country from which they are imported. The time and the place to which the appraisers are required to look, when making their appraisement, are both distinctly specified in the law, the time being the period of exportation, and the place the country from which they were imported into the United States. It makes no \*reference to their [ \* 526 ] value in the country of production, or the time of purchase.

And as there is no ambiguity in the language of the act, and it embraces all goods subject to an *ad valorem* duty, the court would hardly be justified in giving a construction to it narrower than its words fairly import.

It is true, as urged by the counsel for the plaintiff, that in the previous laws upon the same subject, the country of production or manufacture was the place to which the appraisers were referred in order to ascertain their value. And undoubtedly the previous acts of congress, and the policy which they indicate, are proper to be considered in interpreting the act of 1851, and might influence its construction, if its language was found to be ambiguous. But that is not the case in the present instance. The law taken by itself will admit of but one construction, and that is, the appraisement must be made, by the value of the goods in the principal markets of the country from which they are exported, at the time of such exportation to the United States. And, so far as these provisions are inconsistent with the provisions of previous laws, they show that congress had changed its policy in this respect, and intended to repeal the laws by which it had been established.

As regards the second point certified, the word country in the revenue laws of the United States has always been construed to embrace all the possessions of a foreign State, however widely separated, which are subject to the same supreme executive and legislative control. The question was brought before the treasury department in 1817; and, on the 29th of September in that year, instructions were issued by the department, in a circular addressed to the different collectors, in which the construction above stated is



given to the word. The practice of the government has ever since conformed to this construction; and it must be presumed that congress, in its subsequent legislation on the subject, used the word according to its known and established interpretation.

Apart, however, from this consideration, we regard the construction of the treasury department as the true one. Congress certainly could not have intended to refer to mere localities or geographical divisions, without regard to the state or nation to which they belonged. For, if the word country were used in that sense, the law furnishes no certain and fixed limits to guide the appraisers in determining what are its principal markets; and it would often be difficult to decide whether the market selected by appraisers, to regulate the value, was actually within the limits of the country from which the exportation was made. And, moreover, if the construction contended for by the plaintiff could be main-  
[ \* 527 ] tained, it would soon be found that goods would \* not generally be exported directly to the United States, from the principal market where they were procured, but sent to some other place where they were not in demand, to be shipped to this country, and invoiced far below their real value. The case before us shows what may be done to evade the payment of the just amount of duty; and neither the words of any revenue law, nor any policy of the government, would justify a construction alike injurious to the public and to the fair and honest importer.

It follows, therefore, as the catch in question was shipped and invoiced from Halifax, that it was the duty of the appraisers to estimate and appraise it according to its value in the principal markets of the British dominions. What markets within these dominions were the principal ones for an article of this description was a question of fact, not of law, and to be decided by the appraisers, and not by the court. They, it appears, determined that London and Liverpool were the principal markets in Great Britain for the goods in question, and appraised the catch according to its value in these markets. And as the appraisers are by law the tribunal appointed to determine this question, their decision is conclusive upon the importer as well as the government.

The third point presents a question of more difficulty.

By the act of congress of 1842, (5 Stats. at Large, 563,) it was provided that in cases where goods purchased were subject to an *ad valorem* duty, if the appraisement exceeded the value at which they were invoiced by ten per cent., or more, then in addition to the duty imposed by law on the same, there should be levied and col-

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lected on the same goods, wares, and merchandise, fifty per cent. of the duty imposed on the same when fairly invoiced.

It would seem, however, that this provision was found by experience to operate, in some instances, unjustly upon the importer; and that it sometimes happened that, under favorable opportunities of time or place, goods were purchased in a foreign country for ten per cent. less than their market value in the principal markets of the country from which they were imported into the United States. And if they were so invoiced, the importer was liable for the above-mentioned penal duty, although he was willing and offered to make the entry at their dutiable value. The fact that the invoice value was ten per cent. below the standard of value fixed by law, subjected him to the penal duty; and he had no means of escaping from it.

The 8th section of the tariff act of 1846 was obviously intended to relieve the importer from this hardship. It provides that the owner, consignee, or agents of imports which have been actually purchased, may, on entry of the same, make such \*addition in the entry, to the cost or value given in the [ \* 528 ] invoice, as, in his opinion, may raise the same to the true market value of such imports in the principal markets of the country whence the importation shall have been made, or in which the goods imported shall have been originally manufactured or produced, as the case may be; and to add thereto all the costs and charges which, under existing laws, would form a part of the true value, at the port where the same may be entered, upon which the duties should be assessed. And the section further provides that if the appraised value shall exceed by ten per cent., or more, the value so declared on the entry, then, in addition to the duties imposed by law, there should be levied a duty of twenty per centum *ad valorem* on such appraised value—with a proviso that in no case should the duty be assessed upon an amount less than the invoice value.

The difficulty has arisen upon the construction of this act. It appears that the goods in question were entered at the value stated in the invoice, without any addition by the importer. That value, upon the appraisement, was found to be more than ten per cent. below their dutiable value. And it has been argued, on behalf of the plaintiff, that the penal duty imposed by this law is incurred in those cases only, in which the importer makes an addition to the invoice value; and that this provision does not embrace cases in which the goods are entered at the invoice cost or value, although that value should be more than ten per cent. below the appraisement.

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We think this construction cannot be maintained. It is the duty of the importer to enter his goods at their dutiable value—ascertaining it according to the rules and regulations prescribed by law. The entry required is not a mere list of the articles imported. It must also state their value. And if he enters them at the value stated in the invoice, it is a declaration on his part that such and no more is the amount upon which the *ad valorem* duty is to be paid. It is the value declared on the entry, as much so as if he had availed himself of the privilege conferred by this act of congress, and entered them at a higher value. He is, consequently, subject to the penal duty, if the value declared in the invoice is ten per cent. below the appraisement. And this construction is strengthened by the proviso in the same section, which directs that in no case should the duty be assessed upon a less amount than the invoice value. This provision, it would seem, was introduced upon the principle that the party having admitted the value in the invoice which he produces, (and which he is bound to produce when he makes the entry,) shall not be permitted to deny the truth of the declaration he thus makes, and enter them at a lower value.

[ \* 529 ] \* Indeed, the plain object and policy of the law would be defeated by the construction contended for. It was evidently the purpose of this section of the act of 1846 to relieve the importer from the hardship to which he was exposed by the act of 1842, where the under-valuation in the invoice arose from error, or from ignorance of the mode of valuation prescribed by the revenue laws of the United States. For, while it gives him the privilege of relieving himself from the penal duty, by entering them at their true dutiable valuation, it would, according to the construction claimed by the plaintiff, hold out to him, at the same time, the strongest temptation not to avail himself of it—as a much higher penal duty would be exacted, when he added to the value in the invoice, if he still fell ten per cent. below the appraisement, than if he had stood upon the invoice itself. For, in the former case, he would be subject to a penal duty of twenty per cent. on the dutiable value of the goods, and, in the latter, would be liable to only fifty per cent. on the amount of duty which he would be required to pay. It would be difficult to assign a reason for such a distinction; and we think none such is made by the law, and that the importer is liable to the penal duty of twenty per cent. wherever the goods are under-valued in the entry; and it matters not whether this under-valuation is found in an entry made according to the value in the invoice, or in an entry at a higher valuation by the importer.

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The treasury department, in carrying into execution the act of 1846, has given to it the same construction that the court now place upon it; and the penal duty of twenty per cent. has been constantly exacted for an under-valuation in cases where the entry was according to the value stated in the invoice, as well as in cases where an addition had been made by the importer.

In the case of *Bartlett v. Kane* (reported in 16 How. 263,) the entry was at the invoice price, and as that was found by the appraisers to be ten per cent. below its dutiable value, the penal duty was exacted by the government officers. A portion of the goods were warehoused, and afterwards entered for exportation. And the owner demanded a return of the twenty per cent. as a portion of the duty he had paid, and which he was entitled to have refunded upon the exportation of the goods. The demand being refused, the suit above mentioned was brought against the collector to recover it. But this court held that this penal duty was legally levied by the collector, and legally retained, and the plaintiff failed to recover.

It will be observed that the right of the collector to demand and retain this penal duty for an under-valuation in the invoice, was directly in question in that suit; and if the act of 1846 does not embrace cases of that description, the plaintiff was \*undoubtedly entitled to recover. But the point now [\* 530] made was not suggested in the argument, nor noticed in the opinion of the court, nor was any distinction in this respect taken between an under-valuation, in an entry at the invoice value, and an under-valuation where the importer added to the value.

We do not refer to this case as a judicial decision of the question before us; because, although it was in the case, the attention of the court was not called to it. But it certainly may fairly be inferred from it that in 1853, when this case was decided, no doubt had been suggested as to the construction of the act of 1846, and that the mercantile community, and the members of the bar to whom their interests were confided, concurred with the secretary in his construction of the law. And after that construction had been thus sanctioned, impliedly, in a judicial proceeding in this court, and acted on for so many years by all the parties interested, the court think it ought to be regarded as settled, and that what has been done under it ought not to be disturbed, even if this construction was far more doubtful than it is. We shall therefore certify to the circuit court:

1. That the tariff act of March 3, 1851, repealed so much of the former laws as provided that merchandise, when imported from a

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country other than that of production or manufacture, should be appraised at the market value of similar articles at the principal markets of the country of production or manufacture at the period of the exportation to the United States.

2. That in estimating the value of the catch, it was the duty of the appraisers to determine what were the principal markets of the country from which it was exported into the United States, and their decision that London and Liverpool were the principal markets for that article is conclusive.

3. The appraisement appearing to have been legally made, the additional duty of twenty per cent., under the 8th section of the tariff act of July 30, 1846, was rightfully exacted by the defendant.

18h 530  
L-ed 511  
36f 839

ROBERT HUDGINS *et al.*, Appellants, v. WYNDHAM KEMP.

ELLIOTT W. HUDGINS *et al.*, Appellants, v. SAME.

18 H. 530.

RECORD CANNOT BE IMPEACHED HERE BY MATTER *dehors* THE RECORD—ALLOWANCE OF APPEAL—SUPERSEDEAS.

1. The certificate of a clerk of what took place in circuit court cannot be received in this court to contradict the record as it is found in the court below. That can only be corrected on *certiorari*, or by proceeding in the court below.
2. A bond approved and filed after ten days from the date of judgment or decree is sufficient to sustain the appeal or writ of error, though it may not supersede the execution.
3. An appeal may be allowed by a judge in vacation or by the court in term. The only difference in the effect of such allowance is, that notice will be presumed in the latter case, but a citation must be served in the former case.
4. The allowance of an appeal need not be a matter of record in the court below. The knowledge of the clerk that such an appeal was actually allowed in open court is sufficient to justify him in certifying it to this court. The party cannot be divested of his right by the failure of the clerk to make the proper entry of the allowance on his record book.
5. An appeal bond may be approved by the judge in vacation as well as in court.

THESE were appeals from the circuit court for the eastern district of Virginia.

The matters now decided arose on a motion to dismiss the appeal.

*Mr. Robinson and Mr. Pallon*, for the motion.

*Mr. Johnson and Mr. Lyons*, contra

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\* Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the [ \* 534 ] court.

This case has been brought up to this court by appeal from the decree of the circuit court of the United States, from the district of Virginia; and a motion is made on behalf of the appellee to dismiss it, upon the ground that it has not been removed in the manner the law requires, and that therefore we have no jurisdiction over it. And certificates and statements of the clerk, outside of the record, and given since it was certified and transmitted to this court, have been filed as evidence of the irregularity of the removal.

This evidence is not admissible upon the present motion. The record transmitted to this court, certified by the clerk of the circuit court, states that the appeal was taken in open court. This is sufficient evidence of that fact. And upon a motion to dismiss, as well as on the hearing on the merits, no evidence *dehors* the record, as certified and returned by the clerk of the circuit court, can be received here to impeach its verity, or to show that the certificate ought not to have been given. The case, as therein set forth, is the case before this court. And if from inadvertence or mistake of the clerk of the court below, or from any other cause, the record transmitted in this case is defective or incorrect, the errors or omissions should have been suggested in this court, and a *certiorari* moved to bring up a correct and true transcript of the proceedings.

It is true an amendment may be made here by consent, as was done in the case of *Fletcher v. Peck*, 6 Cranch, 87. And so also, where it appeared by the certificate of the clerk that he had committed a clerical error in the transcript, in the form in which he had entered a judgment, in ejectment, and it was evident, from the declaration, that it was a mere clerical error, the court suffered it to be amended here, without sending a *certiorari* to the circuit court to have it corrected. *Woodward v. Brown*, 13 Pet. 1.

But in the case before us, there is no consent to amend, and the errors alleged are of a very different character, from the mere formal error in the case of *Woodward v. Brown*. And if it were otherwise, still, there should have been a motion to amend, by inserting in the transcript the certificates above mentioned of the \*clerk, before the motion was made to dismiss. But no [ \* 535 ] such motion has been made, and the transcript now before the court is the one originally certified, without any amendment here by consent or by order of the court. And the motion is made to dismiss the case, not for any irregularity apparent in the record, but by testimony *aliunde*, offered to show that the transcript is incorrect. It is very clear that such testimony cannot be received to



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support this motion. And the record, as it stands when the motion is heard, presents the case which this court is called upon to decide; and nothing outside of it can be introduced to affect the decision.

Neither is it of any importance as concerns this motion whether the appeal does or does not operate as a *supersedeas*. A writ of error or appeal does not operate as a *supersedeas* under the act of congress, unless security is given sufficient to cover the amount recovered within ten days after the judgment or decree is rendered. But yet, if the party does not give the bond within the ten days, he may, nevertheless, sue out his writ of error or take his appeal, as the case may be, at any time within five years from the date of the decree or judgment, upon giving security sufficient to cover the costs that may be awarded against him in the appellate court. And his omission to give the security in ten days is no ground for dismissing the appeal.

In this case, certainly, the appeal did not operate as a *supersedeas*. The security was given and approved long after the time limited by the act of congress. Nor was any *supersedeas* moved for, or awarded by the circuit court, or the judge of the supreme court, who approved the bonds. Nor could any have been awarded by any court or judge. And, upon the expiration of the ten days, the plaintiff had a right to proceed on his decree and carry it into execution, notwithstanding the pendency of the appeal in this court.

But if a *supersedeas* had been awarded, this motion could not be sustained. The motion should have been to discharge the order, not to dismiss the appeal. And the propriety or impropriety of an order granting a *supersedeas* could not be considered on a motion to dismiss. The order for the *supersedeas* might be discharged, and the appeal still maintained.

The decision of these points disposes of the motion. But in order to avoid any further controversy on the subject, it is proper to add that if the facts offered in evidence were inserted in the record, they would furnish no ground for dismissing the appeal.

They are substantially as follows:

The district judge had an interest in the issue of the case, and withdrew from the bench, and the chief justice of the supreme court sat alone at the trial. The decree was passed on the 27th [ \* 536 ] \* of June, 1855, and the appellant on the same day, in open court, appealed to this court, and his appeal was entered by the clerk among the minutes of the proceedings of that day, by order of the court; and on the next day, June 28, the court closed its session, and adjourned to the next term.

It is the practice in the State courts of Virginia, for the clerk to

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make written minutes of the proceedings in court as they occur during the day; and after the court adjourns for the day, they are all written out in full in what is called the order book, and presented to the court when it meets next morning, and read; and if found to be correct, is signed by the presiding judge, as evidence that the proceedings are therein correctly stated. This practice has been followed by the circuit court of the United States when sitting in Virginia; and according to this practice, it seems the clerk supposed that the appeal ought to have been entered in the order book, but omitted it through inadvertence; and did not discover the omission until after the term had closed. The fact was brought to the attention of the chief justice, by a certificate from the clerk, when the appeal bonds were presented for approval, which was in October, 1855; and when he approved the bonds, he at the same time sent a written direction to the clerk to enter the appeal in the order book, as having been made in open court; and as of the day when it was actually made and entered in the minutes. It may be proper to say, that the penalty of the appeal bond presented for approval was much larger than necessary; because, as the appeal could not then operate as a *supersedeas*, the act of congress required such security only as would cover the costs of the appellee in case the decree should be affirmed. But it certainly could be no ground of objection when the bond was offered for approval, that the penalty was larger than it need have been.

These are the material facts, as they appear in the certificates of the clerk, produced and relied on in the argument. And the appellees contend that the order book is the only record of the proceedings of the court; that this record could not lawfully be amended by the order of the judge after the term was over; that the entry of the appeal made by his direction is not legally a record; and that as there is no record of an appeal in open court on the 27th of June, 1855, the clerk had no legal authority for certifying that such an appeal was made; that his certificate on that account is erroneous; and the case, therefore, is not removed to, and is not in this court, according to law.

The counsel for the appellee, in support of these objections, has referred to a decision of the court of appeals of Virginia, and to the practice in the courts of that State in cases of appeal. The answer, however, to this argument is obvious. The power  
\* of making amendments, and the mode of removing a case [ \* 537 ]  
from an inferior to an appellate court of the United States,  
are regulated by acts of congress, and do not depend upon the laws or practice of the State in which the court may happen to be held.

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The decisions or practice of the courts of Virginia, cannot therefore have any influence in deciding the motion before us.

Neither is it necessary to inquire, whether the entry made in the order book is to be regarded as a part of the record—or merely a memorandum to preserve the history of the case, by entering the appeal in the book where it is usually found, and would naturally be looked for by the party interested. In either view this entry was not necessary to give validity to the appeal. In making the appeal, the party exercised a legal right. It was made in open court, and the clerk had official knowledge of the fact. And it would have been his duty, even if no written memorandum of it had been made, to certify it to this court, when the security was approved by the judge and the appeal allowed. And his certificate of the fact is all that is required in the appellate tribunal. He does not certify it as a copy from the record. The appeal is made orally, and the entry usually made on the minutes or in the order book is to preserve the evidence of the act, and is not necessary to give it validity.

The act of congress does not require an appeal to be made in open court—or to be in writing—or entered on the minutes of the court—or to be recorded. It is often made before a judge in vacation, when it cannot be recorded in the order book as a part of the proceedings of the court. And the law makes no difference, as to the form in which it is to be made, whether it be taken in court or out of court before a judge. In either case it may be made orally or in writing. And the only difference is, that this court has decided that where the appeal is made in open court, during the term at which the decree is passed, no citation is necessary to the adverse party. He is presumed to be in court, and therefore to have notice. But when the appeal is taken out of court, the citation is necessary to give him notice. In all other respects the same rules apply to either mode of taking an appeal. *Reilly v. Lamar*, 2 Cranch, 344; *Yestor v. Lenox*, 7 Pet. 220.

The act of March 3, 1803, which authorizes the appeals, provides that they shall be subject to the same rules, regulations, and restrictions as are prescribed by law in cases of writs of error. And in the case of *Innerarity v. Byrne*, 5 How. 295, where the record transmitted to this court did not show that a citation had been issued and served, it was held to be no ground for dismissing the case, and that the fact might be proved *aliunde*. It is not [\* 538] necessary that all of the steps required to give \*this court jurisdiction should even be on file in the court

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below, and certainly need not appear to be of record in that court. *Masten v. Hunter*, 1 Wheat. 304.

We think it evident, therefore, that the want of record evidence in the circuit court that the appeal was prayed, would be no ground of dismissal; and the certificate of the clerk that it was so prayed, is all that is required in this court.

The objection that the entry on the minutes, and also in the order book, required that the bond should be approved by the court, and that the approval by the judge out of court is therefore not sufficient, is equally untenable.

No copy of the order of the judge directing the entry in the order book has been produced. But the clerk states in his certificate that the order directed him to enter the appeal as of the day on which the decree passed; and without doubt he states it correctly. And in executing that order he appears to have followed the form he had adopted in his entry on the minutes. The same form may perhaps be used in other circuits, and is in some cases probably borrowed from the formulas used in like cases in the State courts. But the appellant had legal rights, and he cannot be deprived of them by any irregularity in a clerical entry. Strictly speaking, nothing ought to have been entered either in the minutes or on the order book as of the day the decree was passed, except the appeal itself. And this, indeed, would appear to have been all the judge ordered. For the appeal could not have been allowed on that day, because an order of a court, or a judge allowing an appeal, is in effect nothing more than an order to send the transcript of the record to the appellate court. It is the clerk's authority for making the return to the superior court. And that order could not be legally given until the security required by law was offered and approved. But, when the appeal was taken, the approval of the court could not be made the only condition upon which it should be allowed. He had a right by law to carry up his appeal, if the security he offered was approved by the judge, out of court, in vacation; and no entry of the clerk, and indeed no order of the court, could deprive him of this right. Neither could the amount of the security be then prescribed. For he had a right to produce his security within the ten days, if he desired to do so, and thereby supersede the judgment, until the decision of this court was had in the premises. And in order to obtain the *supersedeas*, the law requires that the security given shall be sufficient to cover the whole amount of the sum recovered against him. But, if he preferred carrying up his case without superseding, the law does not exact security to the amount recovered. Security is required

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in that case for no greater amount than will cover the [ \* 539 ] \*costs that may be recovered against him in the superior court. Such were the legal rights of the appellant when he made his appeal; and he cannot be deprived of them by the form adopted by the clerk in entering it. The approval of the security by the judge, as it appears in the certificates offered in evidence, is sufficient, and the objection that it was not approved by the court cannot be maintained.

Upon the whole, we see no ground for dismissing the appeal; and the motion to dismiss is overruled.

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ARGUELLO and others, Appellants, v. THE UNITED STATES.

THE UNITED STATES, Appellants, v. ARGUELLO and others.

18 H. 539.

CALIFORNIA LAND GRANTS—MEXICAN LAWS FOR GRANTING PUBLIC LANDS.

1. Two orders or decrees being produced in support of a grant by the Mexican government, dated respectively 26th and 27th November, 1835, the first of which announces the approval of the claim, and the second purports to be a regular concession or title: Held, that the latter, which is more definite in describing the boundaries of the grant, shall govern in that respect.
2. Other evidence of a more extended grant by a subsequent governor considered, and held insufficient.
3. The Mexican laws for granting lands made a clear distinction between grants to empresarios, who agreed to introduce and settle foreigners as colonists, and the distribution of lands to Mexican citizens, families or single persons. The prohibition of grants within the ten littoral leagues applied to the former, and did not apply to the latter.

THESE were cross appeals from the district court for the northern district of California, and the case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Jones, Mr. Strode, and Mr. Benton*, for claimants.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, and *Mr. Gillett*, for the United States.

[ \* 540 ] \*Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

The claimants in this case presented their petition to the commissioners for settling private land claims in California, praying to have their title confirmed "to a certain tract of land called the 'Rancho de las Pulgas.'" They allege that this tract contains twelve square leagues of land, having a front on the bay of San Francisco of four leagues, bounded southerly by a creek

called San Francisquito, and northerly by the San Mateo, and extending back from the bay some three leagues to the sierra or range of mountains, so as to include the valley, or Cañada de Raymundo.

The commissioners confirmed the claim to the extent of four leagues in length between said creeks, and one league in breadth, excluding the valley Raymundo, and bounded by it on the west. This decision of the commissioners was confirmed by the district court, and both parties have appealed to this court.

We shall first consider the appeal of the claimants.

Have they shown a title to more than the four leagues confirmed to them by the commissioners and the court below?

The appellants represent the heirs of Don Luis Arguello, who died about the year 1830.

1. They allege that Don José Dario Arguello, father of Don Luis, being one of the founders of the country, and in its military service as commandanté of the Presidio at San Francisco, was the owner of a tract called "Las Pulgas," by virtue of some title or license derived from Don Diego Borica, then governor of the province, who was in possession of it as early as 1795; that this early title has been lost, and remains only in tradition,

2. That, in 1820 or 1821, Don Pablo Vincenté de Sola made a new title to Don Luis Arguello, who had succeeded his father, Don José, in the possession.

3. That after the death of Don Luis, in 1830, his family remained in possession; that in August, 1835, one Alvisu petitioned the governor for a grant of the "Cañada de Raymundo," and, it being found that the heirs of Arguello claimed that valley to be within the bounds of their rancho Pulgas, notice was ordered to be given to the widow and heirs, of Alvisu's petition. That they appeared by their attorney, Estrada, before the governor, and protested against the grant to Alvisu; and that the governor, on inquiry, acknowledged the justice of the claim of the Arguellos, and refused to grant the valley to Alvisu.

\* 4. That in October, 1835, Estrada, the executor of [\* 541] Luis Arguello, and acting as agent for the family, made application to the governor, setting forth their long possession and praying a corresponding title to be issued in their names; and that the governor, after examining into the justice of their claim, issued a decree of concession dated 26th of November, 1835, which was approved by the territorial assembly on the 10th of December following.

This last-mentioned decree or grant thus approved is the only documentary evidence of title exhibited by the claimants. If it



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includes within its boundaries the "Cañada de Raymundo" as part of "Las Pulgas," it will follow that the claimants have shown a complete title thereto; and our inquiry would end here. Therefore, though last in order in the claimants' deraignment of their title, we shall consider it first.

On the 27th of October, 1835, Don José Estrada, executor of Don Luis Arguello, presented his petition on behalf of the widow and heirs, to Don José Castro, the governor, praying for a grant of the "rancho of Las Pulgas," and describing its boundaries as "from the creek of San Mateo to the creek of San Francisquito, and from the estheros, (the estuary or bay,) to the sierra, or mountains." The petition alleged also that the Arguellos had "been in possession of the same since 1800, as is publicly and notoriously known, but the papers of possession had been mislaid."

The rough draft (*diseño*) accompanying this petition represents a range of hills designated as "lomeria baja," and parallel to these a range of loftier character marked "sierra;" between these ranges is a cañada, or valley; this is the valley Raymundo. The claim of the petition is evidently intended to include it.

On the 26th of October, 1835, the governor made the usual order requiring the *alcaldé* of San Francisco de Assiz to take information as to the land, and make return of the expediente. The *alcaldé* made a report, accompanied by the testimony of three witnesses, who proved an occupancy of the rancho of Las Pulgas by the Arguellos for many years as a cattle range. One describes it as extending from east to west (evidently a mistake for north to south) four leagues, and from the estuary to the hills (*lomas*) situate at the west of Monte Redondo and Cañada "Raymundo." This would include the valley now claimed. But the second witness describes it as "about four leagues" from creek to creek, and "one league" from the estuary to the mountains covered with trees. The third as "four leagues from creek to creek and one league from the estuary to the mountains covered with trees, of the Cañada Raymundo."

[ \* 542 ] \* The petitioner did not exhibit any documentary evidence of a prior grant of any given quantity of land, or setting forth any certain boundary, nor did the witnesses pretend to have ever seen any.

When the report was returned to the governor, he made the following order, dated 26th November, 1835:

" MONTEREY, *November* 26, 1835.

"In view of the petition with which this expediente begins, and the information of three competent witnesses, and in conformity

with the laws and regulations of the subject, the minor orphans of the deceased citizen, Don Luis Arguello, at the petition of José Estrada, citizen, are declared the owners in property of the tract known under the name of 'Las Pulgas;' reserving the approval of the M. E. territorial deputation, to which this expediente shall be sent, the corresponding patent to be signed, and recorded in the corresponding book, delivering it to the interested parties for its suitable uses. Señor Don José Castro, senior member (vocal) of the M. E. territorial deputation, and political chief, *ad interim*, of Upper California, thus ordered, decreed, and signed; to which I certify."

On the next day (27th of November, 1835,) the governor executed the following document to serve as a title or letters patent. It is signed by the governor and secretary, and recorded in the archives.

"Whereas, citizen José Estrada has petitioned in the name of his wards, José Ramon and Luis Arguello, and the girls M'a Concepcion and M'a Josefa, minors and legitimate children of the deceased citizen, Luis Arguello, having previously taken the deposition of proper witnesses, and they having declared the land called 'Las Pulgas' to have been their property of the deceased ever since the year of 1800, whereof the limits are on the south, the Arroyo of San Francisquito, on the north, that of San Mateo, on the east the estuaries, and on the west the Cañada de Raymundo; and using the faculties which are conferred on me by decree of this day, and in the name of the Mexican nation, I have come to declare him the owner thereof by the present letters, this grant being understood as made in entire conformity with the disposition of the laws with the reservation of the approval of the most excellent territorial deputation. The land herein mentioned is four leagues in latitude and one in longitude. In consequence I order that the present, serving as a title to him, and to be held as firm and valid, be recorded in the book thereto corresponding, and be delivered to the petitioner for his security and other purposes."

The claimants rely upon the first document, dated November \* 26, which gives no definite boundary and quan- [ \* 543 ] tity; and argue that, the grant being thus approved by the assembly, the power of the governor over it ceased, and, consequently, that the document, dated on the 27th, which defines the the boundaries and quantity of the concession, is not the definitive grant described in the rules and regulations of 1828. But a glance at these rules and at the contents of these documents will show the fallacy of this assumption.

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The first section of these regulations gives the authority to governors (*gef e politico*) to grant vacant lands. The second directs the form and manner in which those who solicit such grant shall address the governor. The third requires the governor to obtain the necessary information required by the laws of 1824, and consult the municipal authorities, whether there are any objections to making such concession. By the 4th section, the governor being thus informed may "accede or not" to the prayer of the petition. This was done in two ways—sometimes he expressed his consent by merely writing the word "concedo" at the bottom of the expediente; at other times it was expressed with more formality, as in the present case. But it seldom specified the boundaries, extent, or conditions of the grant. It is intended merely to show that the governor has "acceded" to the request of the applicant, and as an order for a patent or definitive title in due form to be drawn out for execution. It is not itself such a document as is required by the 8th section, which directs "that the definitive grant asked for being made, a document signed by the governor shall be given to serve as a title to the parties interested."

The document of the 26th has none of the characteristics of a definitive grant. It shows only that the governor assents that the petitioner shall have a grant of a tract of land called "Las Pulgas." It describes no boundary, and ascertains no quantity. It contemplates a "corresponding patent," and does not purport itself to be such document.

On the contrary, the document of the 27th has all the formalities of a definitive title, and purports on its face to be made for that purpose. It gives the boundaries of the tract known as "Las Pulgas," namely: "On the south the creek San Francisquito, on the north the San Mateo, on the east the estuary, on the west the Ca ada de Raymundo, four leagues in length and one in breadth."

The Mexican authorities have themselves given a construction to this grant in 1840, when they granted the Ca ada de Raymundo to Coppinger, calling for "Las Pulgas" as its eastern boundary.

Moreover, juridical possession was given to the Arguellos, [ \* 544 ] establishing the western boundary of the \*Las Pulgas, one league west of the estuary or bay of San Francisco.

The commissioners and the court below having confirmed the claim of the appellants to the extent of this legal title, the question on their appeal is, whether they have shown any title to the valley of Raymundo, or for any land west of the boundary adjudged to Las Pulgas by the Mexican authorities, so many years ago. In support of their claim the appellants rely upon a supposed grant from Gov-

ernor Borica to Don José Arguello, at an early day, and a regrant or new title to Don Luis Arguello in 1820 or 1821, by De Sola.

Much parol testimony, and some historical documents, have been introduced on this subject. The value and effect of this evidence has been very fully discussed by the commissioners and the court below. We fully concur in their conclusions on this subject, but do not think it necessary to indicate our opinion by a special and particular examination of it. It will be sufficient to state the results at which we arrived after a careful consideration.

1. There is no sufficient evidence to satisfy our minds that any grant was ever made by Governor Borica, or by De Sola. The archives of government show no trace of evidence of such a grant from either of them. They have not proved the existence of it by the testimony of any one who had seen it; they assume the existence and loss of the documents, from the fact that none can now be found.

Without stopping to inquire, whether, by the Spanish law, a subject could claim against the king by prescription, we will assume, for the purposes of this case, that as a presumption of fact, the court would be justified in presuming a grant on proof of fifty years' continuous, notorious, adverse possession of a tract of land having certain admitted and well-defined boundaries; and inquire whether we have such evidence as regards this valley of Raymundo, and the eight additional leagues of land now claimed to belong to the ranches of Las Pulgas.

Don José Arguello was, for many years, commandant of the Presidio of San Francisco; after his death he was succeeded in the command by his son Don Luis. As early as 1797, the king's horses were pastured and herded on this rancho. As early as 1804 soldiers, under the command of Don José, resided in huts on the land included in the grant made to appellants in 1835, and had charge of cattle said to belong to the commandant Don José. The sheep of the neighboring mission of Santa Clara were sometimes pastured on it. The king's cattle, as well as those of the commandant, were pastured on it as late as 1821. After the death of Don José, his son and successor in office, \* Don Luis, continued [ \* 545 ] the occupation of it, by his herds and herdsmen. The cattle on this rancho, at some seasons, wandered over the valley of Raymundo, and to the foot of the western sierra. Don Luis also cut timber at one time on the hills west of said valley.

About 1821 Governor Sola had the king's cattle removed, and permitted Don Luis to remain in possession of the rancho, which he continued to claim as his own up to the time of his death; though he

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took no steps towards obtaining a definitive title. As to the extent of his claim, his eastern, northern, and southern boundaries by the creek and the estuary, were well known and ascertained. The western, though said to be the hills, or mountains, and, in one sense, a fixed boundary, was very uncertain. It might be at one league from the bay to the first range of woody hills, or four leagues to the highest summit of the main ridge of the sierra. Not one of the witnesses who attempt to establish this title by tradition can state what number of square leagues it contained.

No inference of an adverse claim or grant can be drawn from the fact that the commandant of a post pastured his own cattle with those of the king, or that the son and successor in office should continue in possession of the rancho by permission of the governor after the king's cattle were removed. The fact that the cattle of Arguello wandered to the mountains and over this valley affords no necessary presumption that he claimed it or owned it. And in a frontier country the cutting of timber is very equivocal evidence of even a claim of ownership of the land. The evidence shows also an unequivocal denial of Don Luis that his claim extended beyond the bounds of the grant since made to his heirs, or included the Cañada Raymundo.

The fact that the governor, in 1835, refused to grant this valley to Alvisu, because it belonged or was claimed by the heirs of Arguello, cannot operate to give a title to them by way of estoppel. The only inferences that can be drawn from these proceedings are: 1. That Alvisu applied for the land. 2. That the Arguellos claimed it. 3. That the governor refused, for that reason, to grant it to Alvisu. It has always been the wise and just policy of the Mexican government to avoid granting litigious titles. Hence the caution shown in refusing to grant to Alvisu till the true extent of the Arguello claim was established. Estrada, who acted on that occasion for the widow and heirs, reserved to himself the right "to further develop their claim." This was immediately done by his application to the governor for a title, and the proceedings thereon in 1835, which have been already noticed. This proceeding was instituted for the purpose of having a direct adjudication [ \* 546 ] \* on the claim of the Arguellos, and the extent and boundaries of Las Pulgas, which they then occupied as a rancho. Here we have the first proceeding which can operate as an estoppel on either party. The king may be estopped by his deed, and the appellants by accepting as a definitive title to the Las Pulgas a deed excluding the valley of Raymundo, are estopped from asserting that it is included in their grant. Here, for the first time, we have a

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juridical investigation to ascertain and fix the boundaries of Las Pulgas. A name which represented heretofore an unknown quantity has been reduced to certainty. This grant has been registered among the public archives, accepted by the claimants, and possession delivered accordingly. Having thus, by a regular juridical proceeding, ascertained the boundaries and quantity of land represented by the name of Las Pulgas, the valley of Raymundo being without the boundary so fixed, is, in 1840, granted as public land to Coppinger.

There is no evidence to show either fraud or mistake in these proceedings. The appellants have got Las Pulgas by a valid title, according to the boundaries ascertained by the proper public authorities, and cannot now be permitted to recur to vague tradition of a vague and uncertain boundary, to unsettle the titles to a large territory since granted to others.

The case of the United States v. Roselius, 15 How. 31, bears a strong resemblance to the present. There it was decided, that "when a part of the land claimed under a Spanish title was granted to and accepted by the claimant, without any saving of his claim, this must be taken to have satisfied his whole claim upon the equity of the government." It is, say the court, in the nature of a compromise, and conclusive as to the rights of the claimant.

In the case before us, the equity of the claimant was adjudicated after an investigation of the claim, and an ascertainment of its boundary and quantity. But, whether it be treated as *res judicata* or as a compromise, it is equally conclusive as to the claims of the appellant on the equity of the government.

2. We come now to the consideration of the appeal entered on behalf of the United States.

The authenticity of the patent or concession to the claimants for Las Pulgas, in 1835, is not disputed; but it is contended that it is void, "because, under the regulations of 1824, lands lying within the littoral leagues could not be granted by territorial governors, but only by the supreme government."

On the contrary, it is contended by the counsel for the claimants, "that this clause in the colonization laws is not intended as a general prohibition of grants of land within those boundaries, but refers only to foreign colonization; and is applicable to States only, and not to the territories of the republic."

\*It is evident from an inspection of this act of 1824, [ \* 547 ] and consequent regulations of 1828, that they contemplate two distinct species of grants. 1. Grants to *empresarios*, or contractors, sometimes called *pobladores* who engaged to introduce



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a body of foreign settlers. 2. The distribution of lands to Mexican citizens, "families or single persons."

While these countries were under the dominion of Spain, the governors had authority to make grants of the latter description, while those of the former required the sanction of the king. As examples of such colonization contracts in Louisiana, those of the Marquis of Maison Rouge and the Baron de Bastrop may be referred to. They came under the consideration of this court in the cases of the United States v. King and Coxe, 7 How. 833, and the United States v. Philadelphia, 11 How. 609. The contracts were executory. They designated a certain tract of country, which was "appropriated" to be gratuitously distributed among the colonists, but did not confer an absolute or immediate title to the whole tract to be colonized by the contractor. "As the object of these grants was to obtain a body of foreign agriculturists, who would settle together under one common leader, in whom the government could confide, liberal terms were offered. A body of such colonists, besides opening, cultivating, and improving the wild lands, served as a protection against the Indians, and created inducements to others of their countrymen to join them, and thus promote the early settlement of the province."

The same policy was pursued by the Mexican government. Besides the desire of fortifying themselves against apprehended attempts at subjugation by Spain, they had before their eyes the prosperous growth of the United States consequent on the liberal encouragement of European immigration. But, while anxious to encourage immigration of foreigners, they nevertheless entertained some jealousy, well founded, perhaps, that in case of conflict with a powerful neighbor, their sympathies and allegiance might not be safely relied on.

Hence, the caution exhibited in requiring the approval of the supreme government "to grants made to empresarios for them to "colonize with many families." But while a judicious policy might forbid the settlement of large bodies of foreigners on the boundaries and sea-coast, we cannot impute to them the weakness, or folly, of confining their native citizens to the interior, and thus leaving their sea-coast a wilderness without population. On the contrary, the same considerations of policy which excluded foreigners, would encourage the settlement of natives within those bounds.

The statute books of Mexico abound in acts offering every [ \* 548 ] inducement to Mexican families to settle on \* the frontiers; proffering gratuitous grants of land and of agricultural implements—expenses of their voyage—maintenance for a year—

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and leave to import certain articles free of duty. The military posts in the territory were on the sea-coast; and it would be strange policy indeed which would isolate the posts intended for the protection of settlers, and compel them to dwell among the savages without protection. Numerous enactments, also, exhibit their cautious jealousy with respect to foreigners, and especially their coterminous neighbors on the north. An act of 1828 directs all Spaniards living on the coast of the Mexican gulf to retire twenty leagues from it. Another, of 1830, prohibits settlements of foreigners from coterminous nations on any part of their border states.

A careful examination of this decree of 1824, and regulations of 1828, will show that their letter conforms to this policy, pursued with so much solicitude. The title to the decree shows its subject to be "colonization." The term colonization implies immigration in numbers. The first section speaks of the subjects of such colonization as "foreigners." It guarantees to them security of person and property. The second and third describe the lands open to such colonists, and requires the states to make rules and regulations for colonization within their limits. The fourth (whose construction is now under consideration) forbids the colonization of the territory comprehended within twenty leagues of the boundaries of any foreign state, and within ten leagues of the sea-coast, without the consent of the supreme executive power. The sixth section provides that no duties shall be imposed on the entrance of "foreigners." The seventh forbids the immigration of "foreigners" to be prohibited prior to 1840, except of some particular nation, and under peculiar circumstances. The seventh indicates the possibility that the government may find it necessary to take measures of precaution for the security of the federation with respect to foreigners who come to colonize.

These are all the sections of the act which refer directly to colonization. The subjects of it are called "foreigners" throughout. They are the only persons to whom the fourth section has any reference or application.

The 9th section first speaks of the "distribution of lands" to individuals and families, as distinguished from colonists, and provides that Mexican citizens should be preferred, without distinction of classes, except as to those who have rendered special service to their country.

Thus we have seen that the first eight sections apply wholly to colonists and foreigners. It would be contrary to every canon of construction to apply the provisions made for them to the

\* subject introduced for the first time in the 9th section, [ \* 549 ]

or to select the 4th section as applicable to native citizens, while the other seven are confined by their terms to "foreigners."

The regulations of 1828 made for the purpose of carrying into execution the law of 1824, evidently give this construction to that act. It makes a clear distinction between *empresario* contracts for colonization, and grants to Mexican citizens. In conformity with the 4th section of that act, it requires grants to *empresarios* to have the sanction of the supreme government, while those made to individuals or families, need only the approval of the territorial deputation. This may be said to be a legislative construction of the act of 1824, and demonstrates that this restraint of grants within the lateral leagues, had no application except to colonies of foreigners.

If anything further were wanted to fortify this construction, the uniform practice of the territorial governors to make grants to individuals and families within those bounds would be conclusive.

The petition of Jimeno in 1840, praying the governor to apply to the supreme government for a confirmation of these grants, confirms the views we have taken. It shows what had been the antecedent practice on the subject, and that, although Jimeno had doubts about its legality, others had not.

On the whole, we are of opinion that the judgment of the district court is correct, and it is adjudged that the said claim of the petitioners is valid as to that portion of the land described in the petition, which is bounded as follows, to wit: On the south by the Arroyo, or creek of San Francisquito, on the north by the creek San Mateo, on the east by the Esteras, or waters of the bay of San Francisco, and on the west by the eastern borders of the valley known as the "Cañada de Raymundo," said land being of the extent of four leagues in length and one in breadth, be the same more or less, and it is therefore hereby decreed that the said land be, and the same is hereby, confirmed to them; and it is further adjudged and decreed that the said petitioners have and hold the same under this confirmation in the following shares or proportions, to wit: Maria de la Solidar Ortega Arguello, one equal undivided half thereof; José Ramon Arguello, one equal undivided fourth part thereof; Luis Antonio Arguello, one equal undivided tenth part thereof; and S. M. Mezes three equal undivided twentieth parts of said premises.

And as to the portion of the premises described in said petition, which is not included within the boundaries above mentioned, the claim of the petitioners is adjudged not to be valid.

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No. 78. THE UNITED STATES v. ARGUELLO *et al.*

No. 92. THE UNITED STATES v. CERVANTES.

No. 94. THE UNITED STATES v. VACA AND PENA.

No. 99. THE UNITED STATES v. LARKIN AND MISSROON.

Mr. Justice DANIEL dissenting.

From the decision of the court in each of these causes, (as I have done in that of the United States v. Reading, during the present term, and as I should have done in those of The United States v. Ritchie, 17 How. 525, and of The United States v. Fremont, 17 Ib. 542, had I set in the causes last mentioned,) I am constrained to declare my dissent.

The decisions in all the causes above enumerated have, according to my apprehension, been made in violation of the acknowledged laws and authority of that government which should have controlled those decisions and the subjects to which they relate; are subversive alike of justice and of the rights and the policy of the United States in the distribution and seating of the public lands—of the welfare of the people of California, by inciting and pampering a corrupt and grasping spirit of speculation and monopoly—subversive, likewise, of rules and principles of adjudication heretofore asserted by this court in relation to claims to lands within the acquired domain of the United States.

It has by this court been repeatedly and expressly ruled, with respect to the territories acquired by the United States, either by purchase or conquest, that the laws and institutions in force within those territories at the time of the acquisition, were not from thence to be regarded as foreign laws, and in that aspect to be proved as matters of fact, but that the courts of the United States were authorized and bound to take the same judicial cognizance and notice of these laws which they were authorized and bound to extend to the laws of the several States. This doctrine has been ruled after much consideration and reconsideration, as will be seen in the cases of The United States v. King and Coxe, 7 How. 833; The United States v. The Cities of Philadelphia and New Orleans, 11 Ib. 609; and the United States v. Turner *et al.* 11 Ib. 663.

It is conceded that at the times at which the claims now sanctioned by this court came into being, and from a period anterior to the origin of those claims, down to the transfer of the country to the United States, there existed laws and regulations enacted by the Mexican government with respect to the granting of lands within the republic, prescribing the modes in which, and the agents by whom, all grants should be made, and \*pre- [\* 551 ]

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scribing also the limitations and exceptions to which the power of making grants was subjected.

Amongst the laws and ordinances here referred to, are those by which the authority of the provincial commanders or governors to originate the titles to lands was conferred and limited. The prerequisites indispensable for the consummation of titles—the immunity from the power of the provincial governors, or from grants or alienations by them, of lands belonging to the missions; the prohibition of colonization and settlement within twenty leagues of a foreign territory, and within what have been denominated the littoral leagues, or ten leagues from the sea-coast; and the necessity for a sanction by the departmental assemblies to give validity to private or individual titles, were all, by the same system or body of laws, established and proclaimed.

With the wisdom or justice of those laws and ordinances, it is conceived that this court can have no legitimate concernment; much less can it exercise the power to dispense with them or to modify them in any degree whatsoever. Its province and its duty are confined to inquiries as to the existence of such laws, and to their just effect upon the pretensions of claimants necessarily dependent upon and subordinate to those laws; and to the protection of the United States, the successors and possessors of that authority by which those laws were ordained.

Whenever these inquiries shall lead to the conclusion that such pretensions are unfounded in law, the right to the subjects to which they relate devolves necessarily upon the United States, as succeeding to the sovereignty of the Mexican government; succeeding also to the high obligation of so disposing of these subjects as shall render them conducive to the national revenue; shall baffle and defeat the schemes of corrupt and corrupting avarice and monopoly; and shall maintain and secure an equality of privilege and benefit to all the citizens of the nation.

That the laws and ordinances above referred to were solemnly, formally, and legitimately established and proclaimed by the government of Mexico, is not denied, nor is it pretended that they have ever been expressly or openly repealed by the government of the republic. An attempt is made, however, to escape from the authority and effect of those public laws by setting up a practice in violation of them, and from the proof of this practice, to establish a different code or system by which the former, regularly adopted and promulgated, and never directly repealed, has been abrogated and disannulled. The results of this attempt, if successful, (and by this court it has been thus far rendered successful,) are

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these—that the laws and \*institutions of the republic of [ \* 552 ] Mexico, inscribed in her archives, are not to be received and judicially noticed by this court; but they are to be sought for in the existence of machinations and abuses which have at different times obtained, in defiance of the established or regular government, proofs to be collected from sources however impure or liable to improper influences; in other words, the laws of Mexico are to be extracted from statements varying or contradictory as they may be, and resting on the mere assertion of individuals, all of them perhaps interested.

How a proceeding like this is to be reconciled with the decisions of this court already cited, or how indeed it can be reconciled with uniformity or with the safety either of property or person, passes my comprehension to conceive. It can hardly admit of a rational doubt in the mind of any man who considers the character of much of the population of the late Spanish dominions in America—sunk in ignorance, and marked by the traits which tyranny and degradation, political and moral, naturally and usually engender—that proofs, or rather statements, might be obtained, as to any fact or circumstance which it might be deemed desirable or profitable to establish. And it will very probably be developed in the progress of the struggle or scramble for monopoly of the public domain, that many of the witnesses upon whose testimony the novel and sturdy Mexican code of practice or seizure is to be established, in abrogation of the written law, are directly or intermediately interested in the success of a monopoly by which, under the countenance of this court, PRINCIPALITIES are won by AN AFFIDAVIT, and conferred upon the unscrupulous few, to the exclusion and detriment of the many, and by the sacrifice of the sovereign rights of the United States.

A transient view of the circumstances under which these enormous pretensions have been originated, is sufficient, if not for their absolute condemnation, at least, to subject them to a most vigilant scrutiny.

If we look at the condition of the country at the time, we find it in a state of almost incessant agitation, disorder, and revolution—controlled in rapid succession by men either themselves directly and violently seizing upon power, or becoming the instruments of those who had practiced such irregularities—men whose position was created or maintained by no regular or constitutional authority, but simply by force, and continuing only until overthrown by superior violence. Turning our attention next to the grants themselves, they are, without an exception, deficient in the requisites



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The United States v. Cervantes.

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prescribed by the established written laws of the country, as indispensable to impart to them validity; but rest solely upon [ \* 553 ] the circumstances (and boldly \*challenging countenance and support here upon those circumstances) that they have originated in practical and temporary usurpations of power; and that, amidst scenes of violence and disorder, have been either maintained or acquiesced in, in defiance of the known public law.

Yet, these avowals with respect to the origin and growth of these claims—avowals which infect and taint their entire being and character, and which ought to consign them to the sternest reprobation—constitute the merits by which they commend themselves to the countenance and support of a tribunal whose highest function is the assertion of law, justice, integrity, order—the dispensation of right equally to all.

Upon such a foundation, such a pretense, or rather such a defiance of authority, I will not, by an abuse of language, call it even a pretense of right—I cannot consent to impair or destroy the sovereign rights and the financial interests of the United States in the public domain. I can perceive no merit, no claim whatsoever, to favor, on the part of the grasping and unscrupulous speculator and monopolist; no propriety in retarding, for his advantage or profit, the settlement and population of new States, by excluding therefrom the honest citizen of small means, by whose presence and industry the improvement and wealth, and social and moral health, and advancement of the country are always sure to be promoted.

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THE UNITED STATES, Appellants, v. CRUZ CERVANTES.

18 H. 553.

MEXICAN GRANTS IN CALIFORNIA—GRANTS OF MISSION LAND.

1. This court reaffirms the doctrine of *United States v. Reading*, 18 H. 1, *ante* 1, that it is the duty of the governor, and not the claimants, to present the claim to the departmental assembly.
2. The case affords a presumption that it was approved by that body.
3. A grant to a citizen of Mexico within the ten littoral leagues was valid by the Mexican laws.
4. The lands once held by missions, may, when abandoned, be granted as other lands. Their assent also will make a grant valid.

APPEAL from the district court for the northern district of California.

The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the United States.

*Mr. Jones*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 554 ]

The appellee, Cruz Cervantes, having complied with the provisions required by law, obtained a grant from Nicholas Gutierrez, then governor of California, "of a parcel of land known by the name of San Joaquin, bounded on the north by San Felipe, on the south by Santa, on the west by the plain of San Juan, and on the east by the hills of the same name," containing the quantity of two leagues.

This concession, dated April 1, 1836, was presented to the departmental assembly for confirmation. The committee reported in favor of the grant—"on the 12th of July it was returned to the committee for its reformation." This concludes the expediente as certified from the archives. It does not appear whether any further action was taken on the subject by the assembly; nor do the books exist among the archives from which any further facts can be ascertained.

The land granted was reported to be within the ten littoral leagues, and as having at one time appertained to the mission of San Juan Bautista—on a reference of the expediente made to the steward of the mission, their consent was certified, that "the place to be adjudicated to the petitioner so far as the hills, without touching the oak grove," &c.

\* Within the space of two years Cervantes entered on [ \* 555 ] the land, built on it, and cultivated it, and continues so to do. On the 10th of February, 1841, juridical possession was delivered to him by metes and bounds with the customary formalities.

The objections to the validity of this grant are: 1. That it was not approved by the departmental assembly. 2. That the land is within the ten littoral leagues. 3. That it belonged to a mission, and it was therefore unlawful to grant it.

1. The first objection, if true in fact, has been disposed of by this court in the case of the United States v. Reading, decided at this term. Besides, so far as the archives show any action of the assembly on this grant, it is an approval of it; and as there is no evidence that it was rejected or annulled, or any further report made on it, the grantee should have the benefit of the presumption of a decision in his favor.

2. The objection that the land lies within the ten littoral

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The United States v. Vaca.

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leagues, has just been disposed of, in the case of *The United States v. Arguello*.

3. As to the objection that the land had belonged to the mission.

The large tracts of land appurtenant to the mission establishments, were never vested in the church, or any other corporation or individual, by any grant of a legal title. The missionaries and Indians had an usufruct or occupancy of the land, at the will of the sovereign. The record shows, that though the lands now in question had formerly been occupied by the mission, they were not so at the time this grant was made. It was made, also, with the assent of the mission, who set up no claim to further occupancy.

The 17th section of the regulations of 1828 forbid lands "occupied" by missions from being made the subject of "colonization grants for the present," &c., and can therefore have no application to lands not so occupied, and not made the subject of "colonization." Besides, in 1833 and 1834, the government of Mexico passed laws to secularize the missions; since which time, the public authorities have granted these lands to individuals in the same manner as other public lands; as has been decided by this court in the case of *United States v. Ritchie*, 17 How. 525.

The judgment of the district court is, therefore, affirmed.

Mr. Justice DANIEL dissented.

For the reasons of his dissent see the preceding case of *Arguello v. The United States*.

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THE UNITED STATES, Appellants, v. JUAN MANUEL VACA AND JUAN FELIPE PENA.

18 H. 556.

MEXICAN GRANTS—SUBSEQUENT CONDITIONS—EXCUSE FOR NON-PERFORMANCE.

Claimants' original grant was for a definite quantity, and three sides of the boundaries were given. It interfered with other claims, and a new grant was made, with a condition that a survey, with a map of its relations to other claims, should be made and filed. This was a condition subsequent, and the disturbed condition of the country afforded sufficient excuse for not making the survey.

APPEAL from the district court for the northern district of California. The case is stated by the court in its opinion.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the United States.

*Mr. Jones* and *Mr. Strode*, for claimants.

Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

On the 27th January, 1843, the claimants and appellees in this case, Juan Manuel Vaca and José Phelipe Peña, (the latter under the name of Armijo,) received a grant of land from Micheltorena, then governor; the boundaries of which, as stated in the grant, are the Sacramento river on the east, on the west the sierra of Napa; at the north, the creek of Libuaytos, (which was also given as the name by which the tract should be designated,) and the extent ten sitios de ganado mayor. Prior to this grant, a sketch or map was furnished, according to the law, as is shown in the recitals of the grant.

The grant was made, as expressed in it, subject to "the measurements to be made of contiguous ranchos," and the juridical possession to be given after the confirmation of the grant.

Among the contiguous ranchos, on the same creek or river, and which had not been measured, was that of William Wolfskill. Between the claimants and Wolfskill a dispute of boundary arose, which prevented the lands of either from being measured, which continued till 1845.

In 1845, the dispute was settled by proceedings had before the proper authorities, in which it was agreed that Wolfskill should remain with the lands that he claimed on the upper part of the creek, and Vaca and Peña should take theirs adjoining his on the east.

Vaca and Peña petitioned to Governor Pico for a new grant, corresponding to the agreement, and producing the former grant as a foundation for it.

\*The governor made the grant according to the agree- [\* 557 ] ment, bounding the rancho by the eastern limits of Wolfskill, and subject to the measurement to be made of the contiguous ranchos previously conceded.

The prior proceedings and decree of concession were passed to the departmental assembly, and the concession was approved, under the condition that within four months they should put in the hands of the governor a proper map of the land.

The grant by Pico designated the tract as "Los Putos." The stream of Los Putos is the same called in the former grant "Libuaytos.

It is not worth while to inquire whether the departmental assembly had any authority to annex new conditions to the grant thus approved by them. It is a condition subsequent, which, at the worst, only left the title of the grantee open to be denounced. But as the claimant was hindered from performing it by the revolu-

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tionary state of the country, the non-fulfillment of it will not work a forfeiture of his title.

The chief objection urged to this grant, is the want of a survey, and that there is no sufficient designation of boundaries to sever it from the public domain. It is a sufficient answer to this—that the quantity is defined and the general locality. The claimant had been in possession before applying for the grant under a license from Vallejo; the tract was known by the designation of “Los Putos,” or “Lihuaytos.” It was to be located on the eastern boundary of Wolfskill, and on the margin of the river.

The district court confirmed the grant on the authority of the case of *Fremont v. United States*, 17 How. 542. As that case is directly in point and overrules the objections made to this grant, we do not think it necessary to pursue the subject further.

The decree of the district court is affirmed.

Mr. Justice DANIEL dissented.

For the reason of his dissent see the preceding case of *Arguello v. The United States*.

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THE UNITED STATES, Appellants, v. THOMAS O. LARKIN and JOHN S. MISSROON.

18 H. 557.

MEXICAN GRANTS—BOUNDARIES—PRACTICE ON APPEALS.

1. Where the petition did not mention the quantity, a resort can be had to the concession or titulo; and if three sides and the quantity are given, the grant is sufficiently definite.
2. The absence of the approval of the departmental assembly is not necessarily fatal, nor will the absence from the grant of a condition of permanent settlement avoid it.
3. Objections to the fraudulent character of the claim, made in this court for the first time, will not be considered.

APPEAL from the district court for the northern district of California. The case is well stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the United States.

*Mr. Lawrence* and *Mr. Goold*, for claimants.

[ \* 558 ] \*Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from a decree of the district court of the United States for the northern district of California, in

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which a land claim was confirmed to the appellees, and which had been previously confirmed by the board of commissioners.

The grant was made to Manuel Jimeno, who was at the time secretary of the government of California, by Governor Micheltorena, on the 4th November, 1844.

The petition for the same is as follows :

“ EXCELLENT SIR GOVERNOR :

“ I, Manuel Jimeno Cassarin, a resident of this department, represent before Y. E., with due respect, that, inasmuch as it suits my interests to establish a rancho about (port) the Sacramento river, according to the accompanying sketch, I entreat Y. E. to be pleased to grant to me, since it lies completely unoccupied, and nobody has petitioned for it, the land, as it is made apparent by the general map, formed this year by the Land Surveyor Bidwell. By which grace I will receive mercy from Y. E.

(Signed)

MANUEL JIMENO.

“ MONTEREY, *November the 1st, 1844.*”

And on the same day the governor made the following memorandum :

“ MONTEREY, *November 1, 1844.*

“ The party concerned not been being able to report, on account of his being at a time concerned, party and secretary of \*government, I order that, whatever it may be convenient [ \* 559 ] to have in mind, for the purpose of coming to a determination, be brought to my knowledge.

(Signed) MICHELTORENA.”

And on the next day directions were given for the issuing of the patent, as follows :

“ MONTEREY, *November the 2d, 1844.*

“ After having seen the petition at the head of this record of proceedings, the uncultivated state in which the land petitioned for lies, according to the general map which has been formed of the Sacramento river, and whatever else it was found convenient to attend to, in conformity with the laws and regulations on the subject, I declare Don Manuel Jimeno the owner of eleven square leagues (“sitios de ganado mayor”) between Sacramento river, the ranch which the children of Senor Larkin have applied for, and the vacant lands lying south, as the respective sketch shows. Let the corresponding patent be issued; let it be entered in the respective book; and let it be delivered to the party concerned, for his security, and other ends.

(Signed)

MICHELTORENA.”





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“TO THE EXCELLENT DEPARTMENTAL ASSEMBLY:

“I, Manuel Jimeno, represent before Y. E., with all due respect, that by the adjoined title is proved the grant, made in my favor, of a tract of land on the margins of the Sacramento (‘corresponde’) river, and, inasmuch as it pertains (correspond) to Y. E., to give Y. E. approval.

“I beg Y. E. to deign to grant it to me, whereby I will receive grace and mercy. I swear so; and Y. E. will be pleased to excuse my usage of common paper, there being none of the corresponding paper. (Signed) MANUEL JIMENO.

“MONTEREY, *April the 21st*, 1846.”

And on the 3d June, the same year, that body acted upon the application, of which we have the following record:

“ANGELES, *June the 3d*, 1846.

“Account having been given in to-day’s session to the excellent departmental assembly, with this instance, it was ordered to be referred, together with the respective record of proceedings, to the committee on vacant lands.

(Signed) AUGUSTIN OLIVERA.”

\* Jimeno and his wife conveyed all their interest in [\*561] the land to the appellees on the 30th August, 1847; soon after which the grantees took actual possession, and have occupied and possessed the same ever since.

The petition to the governor was accompanied with a sketch or map giving the location, and boundaries of the tract solicited, and referred, also, to a general map of the valley of the Sacramento river, made by Bidwell, a land surveyor, the same year. The quantity of land was not specifically designated in the petition. Neither does the patent itself designate the quantity, but refers to the sketch accompanying the petition. But the concession and direction by the governor to the proper officer to issue the patent, limits the quantity to eleven square leagues, and which concession and direction constitute a part of the evidence of the title, or, according to the Mexican vocabulary, a part of the “expediente,” and therefore may well qualify and limit the quantity to this number, even if the number of leagues within the boundaries, as given by the rough sketch, exceeded it; especially should this construction be given as the power of the governor to grant to a single person was limited so as not to exceed this quantity, according to the 12th section of the decree of the Mexican congress of the 18th August, 1824.

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The decree of the commissioners, and also of the district court, very properly limited the confirmation to the extent only of eleven square leagues, provided the quantity should be contained within the sketch called for by the patent, and if there should be less than that quantity, then no more than this lesser quantity is confirmed.

No question appears to have been made as to the practicability of locating the grant in the tribunals below; nor do we see any ground upon which such a question could have been properly raised in the case.

The plan or sketch found in the expediente in connection with the description given in the grant furnishes all the materials essential to determine the boundaries. Three sides are given; and the quantity will guide the surveyor in closing the lines by running the fourth.

It has been suggested on the argument here, that this grant is a fictitious one, made by the governor to the secretary of the territory according to the forms of law, for the purpose of defrauding the United States. One answer to the suggestion is, that no objection as to the *bona fides* of the grant was taken before either of the tribunals below, where it should have been made, if relied on by the government, so as to have given the claimants an opportunity to have met it. To permit it to be taken in the appellate court for the first time, where there is no opportunity for explanation, would be a surprise upon them, of which they might justly complain. The commissioners say, "the grant is fully proven, and we find no cause to doubt its genuineness." And the judges of the district court observe, "that the grant is fully proved; nor is its genuineness called in question."

Besides this answer to the suggestion, even were we to entertain the question, we see nothing in the record to justify the imputation. The grant was made 4th November, 1844, at a time when California was in the full possession of the Mexican authorities, and more than a year previous to any hostile entry of the forces of the United States, and more than three years before the cession of the country to this government. The fact that seems most to be relied on to maintain the suggestion is, that Jimeno, the grantee, was the secretary of the territory at the time, and hence the grant an act of favoritism. But there is nothing in the decree of 18th August, 1824, of the Mexican congress, or in the regulations of the 21st November, 1828, forbidding such grants. On the contrary, it is known to be the usual mode of remuneration to an officer of the government for meritorious public services. A preference is

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given to such officers in the distribution of the public lands by the 9th article of decree of 1824, above referred to.

It is also objected that the grant does not contain the condition of confirmation by the departmental assembly; and also that there has been no confirmation by that body.

The 5th regulation of November, 1828, provides, that grants to individuals or families shall not be definitively valid without the previous approbation of the departmental assembly to which the respective "expedientes" shall be referred. There is nothing in this or any other regulation that requires this condition to be inserted in the patent.

It appears from the records in the case, that the grant was submitted to this body by Jimeno on the 21st April, 1846; and that that body, on the 3d June following, referred it to the committee on vacant lands; but, for aught that appears, no further action was had upon it. The expediente, however, which was before this body, seems afterwards to have been returned to the appropriate office for the keeping of these records, and was found in the government archives.

The 6th regulation of 1828 provides that, "if the governor does not obtain the approval of the departmental assembly, he shall report the same to the supreme government," together with the "expediente," for its decision. Inasmuch as the record of the title was found returned by the governor to the government archives, and not forwarded to the supreme government, it is \* insisted, on behalf of the claimants, that the fair [\* 563] presumption is, that the grant had been approved; otherwise, it would not have been returned to government archives.

However this may be, it is not important to determine, as it was settled, after full consideration, in the case of *Fremont v. United States*, 17 How. 542, 563, that the omission to procure the confirmation under circumstances existing similar to those attending this case did not operate to defeat or avoid the title.

The grant, in that case, to Alvarado, was made by the same governor, and in the same year of the present grant, and we may add that the grantee was a military officer of the government at the time; the present grantee was a civil officer.

The same case also furnishes a full answer to the objections, that judicial possession was not taken of the land. We refer to the grounds there stated without repeating them, as the fact in their case fully warrant the view there presented.

It is also objected that the grant does not contain the usual condition of cultivation and habitation within the year. Neither the

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act of the Mexican congress of 1824 nor the regulations of 1828, prescribed any particular form of grants or patents of the public lands. And there appears to have been no uniformity in the conditions annexed in those issued by the different political chiefs, nor even as it respects those issued by the same individual. Great latitude seems to have been exercised in prescribing these conditions, both as to the number and the nature of them; also, in respect to the time within which the possession was to be taken when inserted as a condition. It is understood that the condition was usually dispensed with in cases where the grantee was in actual possession at the time of the grant. It was probably dispensed with in the present case; as the grantee was the secretary of the territory, and his services required at the seat of government; especially, as it appears that a civil disturbance had broken out between the political authorities, and which continued down until possession was taken of the country by the United States in 1846 and 1847.

We think it would be going further than required by any of the provisions of the law of 1824, or regulations of 1828, to hold the grant void for want of this condition of possession within a limited time; more especially as it appears that actual possession was taken of the land as soon as the state and condition of the country would admit, and which has been held ever since. And we are the more bound to hold this construction in respect to this particular condition, as the court have already held, after the fullest consideration, that, even in cases where the condition is contained in the grant, the non-compliance with its terms will not necessarily have the effect to avoid the title. Circumstances may excuse the omission.

[ \* 564 ] \* Upon the whole, we are satisfied that the judgment of the court below was right, and should be affirmed.

Mr. Justice DANIEL and Mr. Justice CAMPBELL, dissented. For the reasons of Mr. Justice Daniel's dissent, see the preceding case of *Arguello v. The United States*.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL, dissenting.

In exercising the jurisdiction conferred by the act of congress of the 3d March, 1851, in reference to claims for lands in California, it seems to me this court should be satisfied that the claimant has received a title from the governor, who was a legal representative of the Mexican nation, and that no credit should attach to the acts of the usurpers who from time to time occasioned anarchy and civil war in that territory; that the grant should be, in spirit and effect, a colonization grant, in accordance with the Mexican laws; that it should describe the lands so that they can be identified; and that

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the conditions of improvement and occupancy should be substantially fulfilled. The case before us is a claim for eleven leagues of land lying on the Sacramento river, with that length and of a league in width. The papers purport to have been made during the four first days of November, 1844, by the governor of the territory, in favor of one Jimeno, the secretary of the government. The usual inquiries could not be made, for the party interested was charged with the performance of that duty; though the governor recites that, in making the grant, he had conformed to the regulations. The patent issued the 4th November, 1844, subject to the conditions that juridical possession should be taken, and the proper boundaries marked out, and that the grantee should plant fruit-bearing, or forest trees of some utility; and if he failed to perform the conditions he should lose the land. No act was done by this person during 1844 or 1845, or the early part of 1846, which indicates any claim on his part to this land. There is a petition entered by himself on the expediente, directed to the departmental assembly, dated 21st April, 1846, asking for a confirmation and a certificate of one Olivera, dated 3d June, 1846, that it had been presented and referred to the committee of public lands. Here the connection of Jimeno terminates. The preparation of these papers is the whole extent of that connection. In August, 1847, the petitioner, Larkin, consul of the United States at Monterey, purchases from Jimeno this claim for one thousand dollars, or rather, that is, the price recited in the deed of Jimeno to him. The American flag had been raised at Monterey twelve months before, and the whole country was then in the possession of General Kearney.

\* We have some unsatisfactory evidence that Larkin, [ \* 565 ] either in 1847 or 1848, sent a Spaniard to enter upon this land; a camp, in which he might find a shelter and some conveniences for collecting cattle, form the facts of this settlement.

Neither Jimeno nor Larkin entered upon or occupied the land. This evidence merely shows that Larkin was laying the foundations for a claim upon the United States, and was wholly unconnected with the Mexican regulations. The evidence satisfies me that this claim was fabricated after the difficulties between the United States and Mexico had occurred, with a view to enable the American consul at Monterey to profit from it, in the event of the cession of the country to the United States. I lay no stress upon the fact that the papers are found in the archives. I presume Jimeno was the keeper of those archives. I dissent from the judgment of the court confirming this claim.



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Dennistoun v. Stewart.

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ALEXANDER DENNISTOUN and others, Plaintiffs, v. ROGER STEWART.  
18 H. 565.

CHARACTER OF CERTIFICATE OF DIVISION OF OPINION NECESSARY TO BRING THE  
QUESTION BEFORE THIS COURT.

1. To enable this court to decide on a certificate of division of opinion between the judges of a circuit court, the questions certified must be matter of law, and not matter of fact. It must state the point of law clearly, without leaving this court to weigh or compare evidence.
2. The points must be stated separately and clearly, and must not bring the whole case here when it consists of controverted matter, both of law and facts.

THIS case is partly reported in 17 How. 606; 21 Curtis, 722. As it appeared at this time on certificate of division of opinion on several points, the court refused to consider. The facts on which this refusal was founded are stated in the opinion.

It comes from the circuit court for the southern district of Alabama.

*Mr. Phillips*, for plaintiffs.

*Mr. Stewart*, *per se*.

[ \* 566 ] \*Mr. Justice DANIEL delivered the opinion of the court.

This cause comes before us upon a certificate of division in opinion between the judges of the circuit court of the United States for the 5th circuit and southern district of Alabama.

The evidence before the circuit court on which the division in opinion arose was of the following character:

The defendant, on the 9th day of September, 1850, at Mobile, in the names of James Reid and Co., of which firm the defendant was a member, drew a bill on Henry Goa Booth, at Liverpool, for the sum of forty-four hundred and seventeen pounds fourteen shillings and eleven pence sterling, payable at sixty days' sight, to the order of the drawers in London, on account of 1,058 bales of cotton, shipped by the drawers to the drawee by the ship Windsor Castle.

This bill was indorsed by the defendant, by the name and style of his firm, to the plaintiffs, and, after acceptance, having been returned protested for non-payment, an action of *assumpsit* was brought for the amount of the bill and charges by the indorsees against the defendant as drawer.

Upon the trial before the circuit court there were introduced and read the testimony of sundry witnesses, examined on the part both of the plaintiffs and the defendant.

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The object of the plaintiffs was to sustain their right of recovery upon the bill, by showing that this right had not been lost or impaired by any irregularity or delinquency of the plaintiffs as indorsees and holders of the bill for value.

\* By the evidence adduced by the defendant it was de- [\* 567 ] signed to show that, previously to the purchase of the 1,058 bales of cotton, and as a part of the agreement on which the purchase was to be made, the defendant, or the person or persons by whom the funds for that purchase should be advanced, should hold the bill of lading of the cargo as security for such advances; that this agreement was adopted by the plaintiffs, who required and received the bill of lading as a precedent condition to their purchase of the bills drawn on Booth by the defendant; that the bill of lading thus received as a security, was transmitted by the plaintiffs to a branch of their firm in Liverpool, and by the Liverpool branch, with the knowledge and in violation of that agreement, was surrendered to one Byrne, a creditor of Booth, and thus diverted from the purposes it was intended to secure.

Upon the instructions prayed from the court to the jury, the court were divided in opinion upon the following questions:

1. Whether the firm of Dennistoun, Wood, and Co., of New York, or the plaintiffs, were bound to hold the said bill of lading for the shipment on the said Windsor Castle as a security for the bill of exchange described in the declaration, and whether any amount of loss arising to the said defendant from their failure to hold the said bill for the purpose of securing the proceeds of the cotton specified therein, for the payment of the bill of exchange described in the declaration, can be used as a defense against the bill, or any part thereof.

2. Whether the said Dennistoun and Co. were required to hold the said bill of lading as a security for any bill of exchange drawn by the defendant or his agents upon the said shipment of cotton, other than those to which the same was attached, or of which they, the said plaintiffs, had specific and direct notice at the time of the settlement with Byrne in the manner stated in the depositions; and whether notice to Dennistoun, Wood, and Co., in New York, was operative as a notice to the plaintiffs in Liverpool, though no notice was received by the house in Liverpool of such outstanding bill before said settlement.

3. Whether, if the plaintiffs surrendered the said bill of lading to the said Byrne, under a promise from him that the proceeds of the cotton should be applied to the payment of bills that might come forward, and that this bill should subsequently come forward; and

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that the plaintiffs have failed to sue said Byrne, or to take any other legal proceeding against him, and that the said Byrne has the proceeds of the cotton more than sufficient to pay the bill, these facts or any other facts in connection therewith that are contained in the said testimony, offer any defense against the case of the plaintiffs.

[ \* 568 ] \* 4. Whether any view of the evidence introduced upon the said trial and hereto attached, would warrant the jury in finding for the defendant, upon this point of the defense to the case of the plaintiffs.

5. And the further question arose, whether the statute of Alabama regulating the damages upon bills of exchange like the present, returned under protest, regulates the rate of damage in this case.

We think that our jurisdiction of the questions certified on the record of this cause, is forbidden by previous decisions of this court, bearing upon those questions considered separately, as well as upon the case as presented by them in an aggregate point of view.

In the interpretations by this court of the act of congress of April 29, 1802, authorizing divisions of opinion at circuit to be certified, the following requisites have been prescribed as indispensable to the jurisdiction of this court over questions upon which the judges shall have been opposed in opinion.

1. They must be questions of law and not questions of fact—not such as involve or imply conclusions or judgment by the judges upon the weight or effect of testimony or facts adduced in the cause. *Vide* *Wilson v. Barnum*, 8 How. 258. And the question or questions upon which the judges were opposed in opinion must be distinctly and particularly stated with reference to that part of the case upon which such question or questions shall have arisen. *Vide* *The United States v. Briggs*, 5 How. 208. It is said by the chief justice in delivering the opinion of the court in this case, “we are not authorized to decide in such cases unless the particular point upon which the judges differed is stated;” again he says: “the difference of opinion is indeed stated to have been on the point whether the demurrer should be sustained. But such a question can hardly be called a point in the case within the meaning of the act of congress, for it does not show whether the difficulty arose upon the construction of the act of congress on which the indictment was founded, or upon the form of proceeding adopted to inflict the punishment, or upon any supposed defect in the counts in the indictment. On the contrary, the whole case is ordered to be certified upon the indictment, demurrer, and joinder, leaving this court to

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look into the record to determine for itself, whether any sufficient objection can be made in bar of the prosecution.

2. The points stated must be single, and must not bring up the whole case for decision.

In the establishment of this position, the rulings of this court have been reiterated, and most explicit.

Beginning with the case of the *United States v. John Bailey*, \*9 Pet. 257, it is in that case declared by the late [\* 569] chief justice, that "the language of the 6th section of the act to amend the judicial system of the United States, shows conclusively, that congress intended to provide for a division of opinion on single points which frequently occur in the trial of a cause ; not to enable a circuit court to transfer an entire cause into this court before a final judgment; a construction which would authorize such a transfer would counteract the policy which forbids writs of error or appeals until the judgment or decree be final." To the same effect, and enunciated in language equally if not even more explicit, will be found the decisions of *Adams and Co. v. Jones*, 12 Pet. 207; of *White v. Turk et al.* Ib. 238; of *Nesmith v. Sheldon et al.* 6 How. 41; of *Webster v. Cooper*, 10 Ib. 54.

Upon the trial in the circuit court the examination of witnesses was introduced and relied on both by plaintiffs and defendant to show the nature of the agreement upon which the cargo of *The Windsor Castle* was purchased, and upon which the plaintiffs consented to purchase and did purchase the bills drawn by the defendant upon Booth; the character of the security proffered and said to have been accepted in the bill of lading for the indemnity of the plaintiffs in purchasing the bills drawn upon Booth, and the obligation of the same plaintiffs not to surrender that security, nor to use it to the detriment of the defendant. The case was not placed before the judges upon any general or settled principle of the law-merchant, nor was their opposition in opinion founded upon a case moulded and governed simply by that law, but they have divided upon a case which was or might have been affected by facts heard in evidence, the influence of which facts, as controlling the acts and obligations of the parties, fell peculiarly and properly within the province of the jury.

Again, we do not think that the certificate of the judges of the circuit court conforms to the settled interpretation of the act of congress as expounded by the cases cited, in presenting to this court any single or specific question of law arising in the progress of the cause, but that it refers to this court the entire law of the case as it might arise upon all the facts supposed by the court, and

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The Steamer Oregon.

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which have not been found by the jury. We are therefore of the opinion that this court cannot take jurisdiction of this case as certified from the circuit court, but that it should be remanded to that court to be proceeded in according to law.

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THE STEAMER OREGON.

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ROGER A. HEIRN, Appellant, *v.* JOSEPH and FRANCIS ROCCA.

SAME *v.* ROBERT TURNER and W. TWIFORD.

18 H. 570.

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ADMIRALTY—APPEAL FROM A PRO FORMA DECREE—STEAMBOATS MUST KEEP OUT OF THE WAY OF SAIL VESSELS.

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1. This court will take jurisdiction, though the decree below be *pro forma*, where the circuit judge on appeal from the district court is interested.
2. It is a rule of this court that, when a steamer approaches a sailing vessel, the latter should keep steadily on her course, and the former is required to keep out of the way. 10 How. 557.
3. The rule of the Trinity masters is also adopted by this court, that where two vessels on opposite tacks are approaching each other, each should go to the right, passing the other on the larboard side.
4. These rules being established, every deviation from them should be chargeable as a fault, that there may be no uncertainty in the course to be pursued in the presence of a threatened collision.

THESE cases originated in two libels filed against the steamer Oregon in the district court for the southern district of Alabama, one for damage by collision to the cargo of the schooner William Ozman, and the other for damage to the schooner. The district court decreed in favor of the libellants in both cases. On appeals to the circuit court, an order was entered in each case "that the cause being submitted to the court, a decree is rendered *pro forma*, the presiding judge having been of counsel for defendants, affirming the judgment that was rendered in this case in the district court, namely," &c.

On appeal to this court, the nature of the decree was called to its attention, when, after consultation, it was decided that this court had jurisdiction, and ordered the cases for argument.

*Mr. Nelson and Mr. Johnson, for appellant.*

*Mr. Phillips, for appellees.*

[ \* 571 ] \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

These are appeals in admiralty, from the circuit court for the southern district of Alabama.

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Heirn v. Rocca.

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The first case is an appeal from the decree of the circuit court for damages resulting from a collision between the schooner William Ozman and the steamer Oregon, in the bay of Mobile, on the 8th of September, 1849, whereby one hundred and forty bales of cotton on board said schooner, alleged to belong to the appellees, were injured, and in part destroyed.

A similar libel was filed by the appellees as the owners of the schooner, claiming damages for the injuries done to the vessel. The libels are substantially the same, and they both rest on the same evidence.

The collision took place in the bay of Mobile, where it is eleven miles wide, and sufficient depth of water for the navigation of vessels. The schooner was sailing down the bay before the wind at the rate of six miles an hour. The Oregon was on her passage from New Orleans to Mobile, and was running at the rate of eight miles per hour. It was a starlight night, and the moon also shone. The collision occurred before daylight; but the vessels in approaching each other were seen from a mile and a half to two miles. Under such circumstances, it is extraordinary that they should come in contact.

The witnesses on board The Oregon say, that as the vessels approached each other, the schooner suddenly changed her course, which caused the collision; whilst the witnesses on board the schooner state, it was occasioned by the change of her course by the steamer. In such a conflict of testimony, where the vessels were both steamers or sailing vessels, and there were no leading facts for discrimination, fault would be chargeable to both vessels. But in the case before us the vessels, in regard to a collision, occupy a very different relation to each other. The steamer, having the propelling power, is under the control of her pilot. Her course may be changed, and her progress checked or arrested.

Having this power to avoid a collision \*with a vessel pro- [\* 572] pelled by the wind, she is generally chargeable with fault, when such an occurrence happens. The exception to this rule must be clearly established, by strong circumstances, to excuse the steamer.

The vessels in question saw each other at the distance of more than a mile, probably a mile and a half to two miles. The Oregon was steering near a due north course; the course of the schooner was south. Both vessels continued their course until they came within one hundred and fifty yards of each other. As evidence that the steamer changed her course, the fact is relied on that the schooner ran into the steamer, a little forward of mid-



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The Steamer Oregon.

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ships, with her bow. This result might, possibly, have followed a change of course by the schooner. But, as the movement of the steamer was more rapid than the schooner, such an occurrence would not be so likely to happen, as an attempt by the steamboat to pass the bow of the schooner.

Several experts were examined on both sides to show that the theory of each is wrong, judging from the injury received by The Oregon. The witnesses give their opinions without reserve on this subject. We derive but little light from this part of the examination.

In *St. John v. Paine*, 10 How. 557, this court say: "As a general rule, therefore, when meeting a sailing vessel, whether close-hauled or with the wind free, the latter has a right to keep her course, and it is the duty of the steamer to adopt such precautions as will avoid her." Practically, when a rule for this purpose is laid down, it is rendered ineffectual by admitting exceptions to it. The mind begins to waver as soon as the danger arises, and the exception, rather than the rule, becomes a subject of solicitude with the masters of both boats; and this, practically, annuls the rule, and causes the movements of both vessels to be uncertain. If the rule were absolute, and an insuperable difficulty should prevent one of the boats from observing it, it would be safer and better to slow the vessel or stop it, until the danger shall be passed. This would occur so seldom as to be inappreciable, when compared to the safety it would secure. The rule adopted by the Trinity masters, and sanctioned by this court, is the safe one, that when two vessels on opposite tacks are approaching each other, each should turn to the right, passing each other on the larboard side. This rule is too simple to be misunderstood, and if observed, collisions would not occur between moving boats, whether propelled by sails or steam. The rule once established, every deviation from it should be chargeable as a fault.

The rule of this court is, when a steamer approaches a sailing vessel, the steamer is required to exercise the necessary [ \* 573 ] \* precaution to avoid a collision, and if this be not done, *prima facie* the steamer is chargeable with fault. Whether this rule be regarded or the weight of the testimony, we think, in the present case, The Oregon was in the wrong. The decrees of the circuit court are therefore affirmed.

Mr. Justice CATRON and Mr. Justice DANIEL dissented.

Mr. Justice DANIEL. I am constrained by a sense of duty to

differ with the court in their determination to take cognizance of these causes.

It is my deliberate opinion that these causes, in the form in which they were presented to our consideration, fall within no one of the categories, either in the constitution or the laws of the United States, by which the jurisdiction of this court or that of the circuit courts, have been conferred or prescribed.

The first thing to be observed with reference to these cases is the fact that they are cases in which confessedly no decision has been made, no opinion formed or expressed, nor any judicial action had by the circuit court, in which the judges by their certificate declare, that they have forbore to mature or declare any judgment upon their character, and which they have sent to this court in effect to be moulded and settled *ab origine* by this court.

The true inquiry as to such a proceeding is, can this be done in conformity with the letter; the spirit, or the beneficial ends and design of the constitution and laws?

In article 3, sect. 2, of the constitution, the jurisdiction of this court, both original and appellate, is defined. The former is limited to cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls. In all the other cases enumerated in this article, the jurisdiction of this court is appellate.

To my mind it would involve a solecism too gross for a moment's consideration, to suppose that by any distortion, the language or objects of this article of the constitution could be so interpreted as to invest this court with an appellate power over its own decisions; and yet it is not less an extravagance and a solecism, to contend that this court can by any direct or indirect agency, shape the original decision of any and every case which may be pending in a circuit court, and then recall such decision into this forum for a mere reiteration of what they had already determined and done, under the mere show of an appellate or revising jurisdiction. The framers of the constitution too well understood the nature of human frailty, the influence of prepossession or vanity to believe that, by such a proceeding, either wisdom or impartiality, or the safety of private right would be promoted.

\* They have authorized no such proceeding, and the ex- [ \* 574 ] positions of the constitution given in the organization of the courts by the acts of congress, conclusively show the conviction of the legislature as to the importance of restricting the several courts to that sphere within which their functions could be exercised wisely, impartially, and without the danger of bias or disturbance from foregone conclusions.

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The Steamer Oregon.

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Thus, in the "Act to establish the judicial courts of the United States," it is provided by the 22d section of that act, that final judgments and decrees in civil actions and suits in equity in a circuit court, may be re-examined and reversed or affirmed in the supreme court.

In the construction of this section the inquiry first suggests itself, what is it which the act of congress permits to be affirmed or reversed? The answer is, a judgment or decree. What is a judgment or decree? It is an act or conclusion of the mind, founded upon a view of all the facts and circumstances surrounding the subject as to which that conclusion is formed; and it is to be a final judgment, showing still more clearly that all the facts and circumstances have been weighed and appreciated. Such a judgment, it is provided by the statute, may be re-examined by this court. Can it be rationally contended that such a judgment as the statute describes can be affirmed of a proceeding which on its face declares that no conclusion upon any fact or circumstance, nor on any question of law connected with it, has been formed? That all that has occurred is a mere formality, and nothing more, and has been adopted expressly to avoid a judgment. How can that be said to be re-examined, as to which it is admitted there has been no previous examination?

Turning in the next place to the law by which divisions of opinion are authorized to be certified to this court, we find the language of the law to be thus. Act of April 29, 1802, § 6, 2 Stats. at Large, 159, "That whenever any question shall occur before a circuit court, upon which the opinions of the judges shall be opposed, the point upon which the disagreement shall happen, shall, during the same term, upon the request of either party or their counsel, be stated under the direction of the judges, and certified under the seal of the court to the supreme court." Here then is the sole authority by which certificates of division in opinion are permitted or directed; and what does that authority explicitly require? That there shall be pending in the circuit court a question or questions upon which the opinions of the judges shall be opposed; that there must be a disagreement between the judges, and that only the point upon which such disagreement shall happen, shall be certified. Can language be possibly plainer than [ \* 575 ] this? I will not so far offend against \* common sense, as to attempt an argument to show that opposition in opinion or disagreement has not existed between persons as to a matter with reference to which they have formed or expressed no opinion what-

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Heirn v. Rocca.

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soever, and with regard to which they declare that such is the truth of the case.

The cases before us comprise no one requisite prescribed by the constitution and act of congress. Let us for an instant look to the consequences likely to ensue, which indeed must inevitably ensue, from the doctrine now promulged from this court. There are at this time, it is believed, thirty-one States in this Union, besides several territories; and of these territories it has been recently stated on the floor of congress there is space sufficient for the formation of sixty additional States. In a majority of the existing States there have been created more than one district court, invested with circuit court jurisdiction. If this privilege of forcing upon the supreme court the original decision of causes instituted in the circuit courts be legitimate, it appertains to every court possessing circuit court jurisdiction existing in the States already members of the confederacy, and must appertain equally to any number however augmented. It cannot be extended to a portion of the courts and denied to the residue.

To those who already feel the burden of the litigation of this extended country, when restricted within the narrowest limits prescribed by the constitution and laws, it need not be shown what are to be the effects of throwing upon them the entire mass of circuit court duty and cognizance; but beyond those who more immediately experience those effects, it becomes a subject of gravest reflection to every one interested in the regular and effectual administration of the law in the federal courts.

But it has been said that the practice sanctioned by the decision in this case is warranted by the authority of precedent in this court. It is undeniably true, that instances like the present, without having their nature or tendencies brought by argument to the test of examination, have several times occurred. But can the simple fact that such instances have occurred, affect their justification in violation of the constitution and law, and to the absolute destruction of everything like efficiency in the federal courts?

I am fully impressed with the importance of precedent, and would never attempt to impair its influence within the sphere of its legitimate authority; but I can never yield to it my support, much less implicit obedience, when invoked for the purpose either of introducing or hallowing abuses. If the mere existence or the prevalence of these can impart to them either authority or sanctity, the cause of justice or morals would indeed be desperate; there could never be reformation. There has \* perhaps [ \* 576 ] never been a time in which many abuses in politics, law,

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The Steamer Oregon.

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morals, and religion have not obtained currency; indeed, the human imagination can hardly picture an error, a folly, a vice, or a crime, which has not had its prototype. But the decision cannot invoke the weight or authority of established precedent in its support. On the contrary the more recent and well considered cases determined by this tribunal, are in direct opposition thereto. Without entering upon them at large, the cases of *White v. Turk et al.* 12 Pet. 238; of *The United States v. Stone*, 14 Pet. 524; of *Nesmith v. Sheldon et al.* 6 How. 41; and of *Webster v. Cooper*, 10 How. 54, are confidently appealed to in support of this position. These cases, so well considered, and so recently ruled, are now in effect reversed, for the purpose of reviving a practice unauthorized by the constitution or by the legislation of congress; a practice necessarily fruitful of great mischief.

I object in fine to the decision in this case, because to me it seems calculated to impair, if not to destroy, that satisfaction and confidence which it is so desirable should everywhere prevail with reference to the proceedings of this tribunal.

With private persons, or in governments, or in public bodies of any description, there is no experiment or course of action more pregnant with danger, than is the exercise or the effort to exercise forbidden or even doubtful powers. Such an assumption rarely fails to react, or to operate reflectively upon those by whom it is essayed; never, indeed, except in instances in which it can be sustained by a power absolute and irresponsible enough to repress opposition, or to silence the expression of public sentiment. In such instances, but in those only, the act or the attempt can be safe. But under our system of polity no immunity was ever designed, much less has one been provided for anything of this kind. With whatever deference and to whatever extent, therefore, the opinions of this tribunal may be recognized, (and by no one will they within their proper bounds be maintained with truer loyalty than by myself,) yet when challenged to obedience to those opinions, I am bound to remember that the constitution is above all and over all, and that public opinion conveyed through its legitimate channel, the legislation of the country, will cause itself to be heard and respected.

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Ogilvie v. The Knox Insurance Co.

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ADAM OGILVIE and others, Complainants, v. The KNOX INSURANCE  
COMPANY and others.

18 H. 577.

QUESTIONS CERTIFIED IMPROPERLY ON DIVISION OF OPINION.

1. On a bill in equity the question of fraud is a mixed one of law and fact, and unless the facts are so certified as to raise the question distinctly, this court cannot take jurisdiction.
2. Nor can this court, on such insufficient data, determine whether depositions are competent evidence, where the contents of the depositions are not in the record.

THE case comes here by certificate of division of opinion between the judges of the circuit court for the district of Indiana. All that is necessary to understand the decision of the court is stated in the opinion.

\* Mr. Justice DANIEL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 579 ]

\* The complainants, by bill in equity, claim an indem- [ \* 580 ]  
nity for losses upon policies issued to them by the company.

They allege that the company by its charter, were authorized after their organization, to increase the amount of their stock by further subscriptions thereto. That in virtue of the authority of this permission, several individuals who are made defendants to the bill, did in June, 1850, subscribe for shares in the company; that they had paid in cash a portion of those shares, and had executed for the residue securities which were still unpaid. The bill further alleges, that the company are destitute of funds or property which can be reached by execution, and prays that the amounts subscribed by the individual defendants as stockholders, and which are still unpaid, may be applied to the satisfaction of the demand of the complainants.

The answer of the company, which is not made a part of this record, is stated to contain a general admission of the charges in the bill. The individual defendants, whilst they do not deny their subscription to the stock of the company, nor their execution of the securities for the payment of that subscription, deny their liability to payment thereof upon the ground that their subscription, and the execution of those securities, were obtained from them by fraudulent representations by the agent of the company, as to the amount of the stock actually subscribed, and as to the funds possessed by the company. The depositions of three of the individual defendants were offered in evidence on behalf of others, who were co-defendants, to prove the fraud in the agent of the company alleged in the answers, and were excepted to as incom-



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Ogilvie v. The Knox Insurance Co.

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petent evidence. But the facts stated by these witnesses are not set forth in the record. At the hearing the following order was made by the court, viz: And now at the May term 1855, under the pleadings and on the facts above set forth, the following questions occurred:

1. Are the depositions of the defendants, Savitz, Cullom, and Schwartz, under the circumstances of this case and to the effect above stated, competent as evidence for their co-defendants?

2. Will the fraud of the agent of the Knox Insurance Company in procuring said subscriptions, notes, and bills, if sufficient to avoid the said subscriptions, notes, and bills, as against the said insurance company, be a defense against the complainants in this suit?

Upon the first question propounded by the certificate in this case, we deem it necessary to express an opinion, because, whatever might be the opinion of this court as to the degree of interest which shall disqualify a witness, we consider the solution of any such question as irrelevant, under the considerations by which our opinion

upon this case as presented to us must be controlled.

[ \*581 ] \*The foundation of the case certified is, first the assumption of fraud practiced by the agent of the insurance company; and, secondly, an inquiry as to the liability of the company resulting from the connection of the company as principal with their agent, and from the character of the fraud assumed as above.

The question of fraud or no fraud, is one necessarily compounded of fact and of law; and without a correct and precise knowledge of the facts from which the legal conclusion should be deduced, it is not easy to perceive how any legal conclusion can be reached.

In this case, as certified, there is no fact shown by which the precise connection of this alleged agent with the company is established; or the character or extent of any representations said to have been made by him, and upon which it is assumed that the company may be bound. There is nothing then before us upon which this court could deduce any inference or conclusion properly applicable to the case as it really exists. The question propounded, therefore, appears to be one that is entirely general and abstract, and which can admit of no answer but one which is equally abstract and general, and which may in truth have no application to the case. We therefore think that this certificate admits of no other answer than an order that the case be remanded to the circuit court to be proceeded in according to law.

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Crockett v. The Steamboat Isaac Newton.

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## THE STEAMBOAT ISAAC NEWTON.

JONATHAN CROCKETT and others, Appellants, v. THE STEAMBOAT ISAAC NEWTON.

AUGUSTUS LORD v. THE SAME.

18 H. 581.

## ADMIRALTY—COLLISION—STEAM AND SAILING VESSELS—RELATIVE DUTIES.

1. While it is a rule that a sail vessel approaching a steamer should steadily keep her course, she is not bound to do this where that will make collision inevitable. She may, when the danger is otherwise inevitable, change her course to avoid it.
2. A sailing vessel, however, cannot be put in the wrong for obeying the general rule, without a very strong case for a different course.
3. A steamer held in fault for running to her dock in the harbor of New York, through an opening of three hundred feet between vessels, without making sure that no other vessel was in the way, when a reasonable exercise of care would have shown her there was.

THESE cases were appeals from the circuit court for the southern district of New York. Both the circuit and district courts dismissed the libel.

The facts of the case are very fully stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Benedict*, for appellants.

*Mr. Cowles*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 582 ]

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the southern district of New York, in a cause of collision, prosecuted by the owners of the schooner Hero, against the steamer Isaac Newton.

On the sixteenth of July, 1850, the schooner Hero, of the burden of 100 tons, which had been lying at pier No. 15 on the North river, in the city of New York, hauled out of the dock, soon after sunrise got up her mainsail and both jibs, and pushed off into the stream. The tide was about half ebb, setting to the southward and eastward, and the wind was about southeast, but so light that very little way could be made. A brig was at anchor in the river, a little below pier No. 15, about one hundred and fifty yards from the piers; and immediately below the brig, at a distance of about 300 feet, two ships were also anchored. When The Hero had got within a short distance of the brig, and was nearly between the brig and the town, and while her crew were in the act of hoisting the peak of the foresail, the body of the sail being up, the steamer

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The Steamboat Isaac Newton.

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Isaac Newton came down the river, and seeing no clear passage to her dock at pier No. 16, except that of about 300 feet between the brig and the ships at anchor, swung round, passed between those vessels at anchor, straightened up alongside the brig for her dock, and then, for the first time, discovered The Hero directly in her course. The two ships being at anchor astern of the steamer, the latter could not back, without the certainty of injuring herself and one of the ships; she kept on her course, struck the Hero on the starboard bow, which was stove, and the schooner almost immediately filled.

It is pleaded that the Hero was in fault, because her helm was not put hard down and kept there, when the danger was first discovered. The distance between the steamer and the schooner, when the latter straightened up and headed for the former, was only about 400 feet, as testified by the pilot in charge of the [\* 583] \* steamer. The opportunity for the schooner to make any manœuvre, was consequently very small; and though some of the witnesses say there was breeze enough at the moment to give the schooner steerage way, others deny this. It must be remembered that the general rule is, for a sailing vessel, meeting a steamer, to keep her course, while the steamer takes the necessary measures to avoid a collision. And though this rule should not be observed when the circumstances are such that it is apparent its observance must occasion a collision, while a departure from it will prevent one, yet it must be a strong case which puts the sailing vessel in the wrong for obeying the rule. The court must clearly see, not only that a deviation from the rule would have prevented collision, but that the commander of the sailing vessel was guilty of negligence or a culpable want of seamanship, is not perceiving the necessity for a departure from the rule; and acting accordingly.

We do not think this was such a case. Besides, the master of the schooner testifies, that the helm of the schooner had been put hard down by him, and fastened there in a becket, as soon as he saw the steamer, and before hailed from the latter. In this he is corroborated by his mate and crew. Other witnesses say, they saw a man run aft, when hailed, and put the helm first up and then down. This apparent discrepancy may be accounted for by the fact mentioned by those on board the schooner; that, after the master had left the helm hard down in a becket, and just before the collision, the mate ran aft. Perhaps he went to the helm, and he may have changed it. But we do not think what he did could have influenced the result. Fault was also attributed to the schooner, in the argument at the bar, because she left her dock

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Crockett v. The Steamboat Isaac Newton.

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when the wind was so light and baffling that she was not really manageable. But we think there was no impropriety in her being where she was at the time of the collision, with her sails hoisted, waiting for a wind to get out of the harbor, any more than in her being at anchor there. It is true she would have no right to endanger other vessels by drifting afoul of them. This she was bound to avoid, by coming to anchor. But till there was danger of this, and none such appears in the case, she had a right to wait for a wind there in daylight, with her sails hoisted.

We hold the schooner to have been free from fault.

After a careful consideration of the evidence we cannot think the steamer did all that could reasonably be required to avoid the collision. After the schooner was seen from the steamer, we have no doubt a collision, either with the schooner, or with one of the ships at anchor, was inevitable; and that the steamer chose that alternative least dangerous to herself, and ran down \* the schooner. But the fault was, in not discerning the [ \* 584 ] schooner before getting into that position. Though the brig was at anchor between the steamer and the schooner when the former was sweeping across the river and heading for the opening between the brig and the ships, yet the sails of the schooner were hoisted, and must have been visible over the hull of the brig. The steamer, therefore, made for this passage, not only without first ascertaining it to be clear but without discovering the sails of the schooner which might and ought to have been seen, and which, if seen, would have warned those managing her that the passage there was not clear. We hold this attempt of the steamer to come to her landing between the vessels at anchor, without first ascertaining that the track was clear, to have been culpable, and accordingly, that she must be condemned in the damages and costs.

The decree of the circuit court is reversed, and the cause remanded to be proceeded with according to law.

Mr. Justice DANIEL dissented in both cases.

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The Steamer Southern Belle.

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## THE STEAMER SOUTHERN BELLE.

WILLIAM B. CULBERTSON, Appellant, v. THE STEAMER SOUTHERN BELLE  
and others.

18 H. 584.

18h 584  
L-ed 403  
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## ADMIRALTY—COLLISION BETWEEN STEAMER AND FLAT-BOAT.

1. Where, by an ordinance of a city, or by general usage, a locality for flat-boat and a different one for steamboat landings on the bank of a river are designated, vessels are bound to conform their action to this designation.
2. A steamboat approaching such a landing, especially if the wind is high, is bound to use more than ordinary care, because there is always great danger under such circumstances.
3. Hence, where a flatboat is fast to the bank at a place designated for such boats, a steamer, which might have seen and avoided her by great care and vigilance, is liable for the damage of a collision on her landing at that point.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and the facts on which it was decided are stated in the opinion of the court.

It was a case of collision, and the decree of the district court was in favor of the libellant. This decree was reversed in the circuit court, from which latter decree the present appeal is taken.

*Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Vinton*, for appellant.

*Mr. Crittenden and Mr. Pike*, for appellees.

[ \* 585 ] \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal, in admiralty, from the decree of the circuit court, for the eastern district of Louisiana.

The libel states that the libellant was the owner of a flat-boat, called *The Rainbow*, with a cargo of the value of three thousand dollars and upwards; that the said boat, with its cargo, being a staunch vessel of its kind, with an efficient crew, on a voyage down the Mississippi river, was moored, at night, at Grand Gulf, in the proper and usual place for flat-boats, and securely tied to the bank of the river; that while so fastened, close to the shore, the steamer *Southern Belle*, a regular packet on said river, in attempting to land at the town of Grand Gulf, ran into and sunk the flat-boat, which caused the total loss of the boat and cargo; that the steamer was out of its place and carelessly managed, by reason of which the collision occurred. The libellant claims damages, &c.

The owners of the steamboat, in their answer, allege that she plied as a regular packet between New Orleans and Milliken's Bend, in Louisiana; that in ascending the river on the 3d of January,

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Culbertson v. The Steamer Southern Belle.

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1853, shortly before daybreak, she approached the town of Grand Gulf; that, in drawing near the wharf-boat, used as a landing, it was discovered that another steamer was fastened to the wharf; that as the wind was high toward the shore it was deemed unsafe to make fast to the steamer; The Southern Belle, therefore, dropped down, with the intention of coming in astern of the steamer, and below the wharf-boat; that in making this change, the flat-boat was first seen lying close under the high bank of the river, about thirty yards below the wharf-boat; that an attempt was immediately made to back out and avoid the collision, which could not be done, as the wind blew strongly; that the place occupied by the flat-boat was known to be the cotton landing, where The Southern Belle regularly landed every trip to take cotton on board; that the place appropriated for flat-boats was about three hundred yards above the wharf-boat; that the master of the flat-boat was notified before the collision; that his boat was not moored in its proper place, and that he neglected to keep a light, &c.; that the collision was caused, not by any negligence or want of skill on the part of the crew and \*officers of The Southern Belle, [ \* 586 ] but in consequence of the negligence of the master and crew of the flat-boat, &c.

The district court decreed in favor of the libellant, for the amount of the damage sustained, which decree was reversed on an appeal to the circuit court. The latter decree is now before us on an appeal.

An ordinance of the town of Grand Gulf, passed in 1838, was given in evidence, relating to the division of the landings for different kinds of boats. In this ordinance, the landings for steam-boats, keel-boats, and flat-boats, were designated, and the duties of the harbor master were defined. An objection by the respondent being made, that no sufficient proof had been offered as to the power of the town to pass the ordinance, the objection was obviated by the fact in the record, which showed that the respondent had introduced the ordinance as evidence. It was then insisted that the ordinance had fallen into disuse by common consent, and could not be considered as evidence of a usage or law. But from the evidence it would seem that the duties of the harbor master were performed, and that the places of landing for the different boats were generally understood.

Whether a rule on this subject be established by an ordinance or general usage is immaterial, if the regulation has been so made as to be generally known; and this seems to have been the case at Grand Gulf, in regard to the ordinance in question.

The Rainbow arrived, and was moored within the ground desig-



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The Steamer Southern Belle.

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nated for flat-boats, and was fastened to the bank the evening which preceded the morning of the collision. The Southern Belle, in ascending the river, arrived at Grand Gulf about daylight—some of the witnesses say a little before, others a little after. It appears that the moon was shining, and that, in passing the flat-boat, it was light enough to read from it the name of The Southern Belle, on her wheel-house, some hundred yards from the shore. The pilot of the steamer intended to land at the steamboat wharf, three hundred and thirty feet above the place where the flat-boat was fastened. But, in approaching the wharf, he discovered The Atlantic steamer, with cattle on board, occupied it; and the wind being high, he was afraid that an attempt to land, so as to fasten to The Atlantic, might do damage, at least, to the cattle on board of that boat. To avoid this, orders were given to back the boat, and land below the wharf. In doing this, the control of the boat was lost, and the wind to the shore being high, The Southern Belle was thrown against the flat-boat, which immediately sunk her. As the steamer was falling back, it is alleged the flat-boat, for the first time, was discovered; but it was too late, under an adverse wind, to avoid the collision. George W. Smith says, The [ \* 587 ] \*Southern Belle, by keeping on her steam, might have landed above the wharf-boat. That landing, for three hundred yards, is as good as the landing below.

At the time the steamer passed within one hundred yards of the flat-boat, it could be seen two hundred yards or more. A witness states at the time, he could distinctly see across the river. It appears from some of the witnesses, that there was space enough to land the steamer below the wharf-boat, and above the flat-boat.

Some time during Monday night, a floating log struck the bow of The Rainbow, so as to break a hole through it, but the damage in a short time was repaired. The bow was turned down the stream to avoid the force of the current.

It is objected that the flat-boat had no lights. She had a light on deck, as proved by her captain and another witness, fifteen minutes before the collision, and at the time it occurred; but as she was fastened to the shore, and from the weight of evidence was in her right place, a light was not necessary. Where a boat is anchored in the path of vessels, a light is indispensable; but it is not required where the boat is fastened to the shore, especially at a place set apart for such boats.

When a steamer is about to enter a harbor, great caution is required. There being no usage as to an open way, the vigilance is thrown upon the entering vessel. Ordinary care, under such cir-

cumstances, will not excuse a steamer for a wrong done. A vessel tied to the shore is helpless. No movement can be made by it to avoid an entering boat; therefore, the whole responsibility rests on such boat.

It is admitted that where a collision occurs, as the result of uncontrollable circumstances, no responsibility attaches to either party; but this cannot be said of the respondent. The evidence shows no fault in the flat-boat, but there was fault in the steamer. The wind was high when she approached the landing—this should have produced in her officers the utmost vigilance. That they were sensible of this, was shown by their not attempting to fasten to *The Atlantic*. But they were highly culpable in not keeping up the steam, so as to have the control of their boat. The river was open, so that, had the steam power been kept up, the boat might have been turned against the wind, and made a safe landing. But her headway had been lost by backing, so that she became as a log driven by the winds and waves, and in this manner was thrown upon the flat-boat.

The evidence authorizes the inference that the flat-boat was seen from on board the steamer as she passed it in running up to the wharf. It is inconceivable that others should be able to see the opposite shore of the river, and for a hundred and fifty \* yards plainly discern the flat-boat from the steamboat [\* 588] wharf, while the officers of the steamer, in passing so near the shore, should not have observed it. The responsible officers of a steamer, when about to land, are not presumed to close their eyes; on the contrary, all experience requires an exercise of uncommon vigilance. Landing a boat, especially when the wind is high, is always attended with more or less danger. After making due allowance for the lights of the steamer, which enabled persons from the flat-boat or wharf to see the steamer, and read her name while passing, the vision of those on board the steamer could not have been so defective, or blinded by her lights, as not to perceive the flat-boat. The captain of the steamer was not sworn, and from this a strong presumption arises that his evidence would have been against his owners. He must have been on the alert in landing, as his duty required, and indeed as the evidence shows he was.

There is no ground of suspicion that the officers of *The Southern Belle* designed to injure *The Rainbow*; on the contrary, when it was too late, they endeavored to avoid the collision. Their fault consisted in not landing above the wharf-boat, or in not keeping up the steam, so as to give them the control of the boat. The

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flat-boat was plainly discernible from the wharf-boat; and if the officers of the steamer did not see it, it was because they were wanting in vigilance. But whether they saw it or not, the respondents are liable for the damage done. The decree of the circuit court is reversed.

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THE UNITED STATES, Plaintiffs, v. WILLIAM G. SHACKLEFORD.

18 H. 588.

RIGHT OF CHALLENGING JURORS IN CRIMINAL CASES.

1. The act of congress of July 20, 1840, which authorizes the courts of the United States to conform the rules for impaneling jurors to those of the State in which the court is held, extends to the right of challenge.
2. But this does not include trials for treason and other capital offenses, for these are regulated by section 30 of the crimes act of 1790. 1 Statutes at Large, 119.
3. Unless the laws and usages of the State court permit it, the prosecution should not be allowed any peremptory challenge.

THE case comes up on a certificate of division of opinion from the circuit court for the district of Kentucky, and the point is stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the United States.

*Mr. Underwood*, for defendant.

[ \* 589 ] \* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This case comes up on a certificate of a division of opinion between the judges of the circuit court of the United States for the district of Kentucky.

The prisoner was indicted for a misdemeanor in wrongfully deserting the mails of the United States, before delivering them to the proper officer or agent, he being a mail carrier at the time, and, as such, having the mails in charge. (§ 21 of act of cong., 3d March, 1825; 4 Stats. at Large, 107.)

A question arose, in impaneling the jury, whether the prisoner was entitled to a peremptory challenge of one or more jurors, upon which the judges were divided in opinion.

The act of congress passed 20th July, 1840, 5 Stats. at Large, 394, provides that jurors, to serve in the courts of the United States, in each State, shall have the like qualifications, and be entitled to the like exemptions, as jurors of the highest court of law of such State now have and are entitled to, and shall hereafter from time

to time have and be entitled to ; and shall be designated by ballot, lot, or otherwise, according to the mode of forming such juries now practiced, and hereafter to be practiced therein, so far as such mode may be practicable by the courts of the United States, or the officers thereof. “ And, for this purpose, the said courts shall have power to make all necessary rules and regulations for conforming the designation, and impaneling of juries, in substance to the laws and usages \* now in force in such State ; and, further, [ \* 590 ] shall have power, by rule or order, from time to time, to conform the same to any change in these respects, which may be hereafter adopted by the legislatures of the respective States for the State courts.”

The court is of opinion that the power conferred upon the federal courts to adopt “ rules and regulations for conforming the designation and impaneling of juries to the laws and usages in force at the time in the State,” enables them to adopt the laws and usages of the State in respect to the challenges of jurors, whether peremptory or for cause, and in cases both civil and criminal, with the exception, in criminal cases, of treason and other crimes, of which the punishment is declared to be death.

The § 30 of the crimes act of 1790, 1 Stats. at Large, 119, provides, that if persons indicted for treason against the United States shall challenge peremptorily above the number of thirty-five of the jury, or if persons indicted for any other of the offenses before set forth, for which the punishment is declared to be death, shall challenge peremptorily above the number of twenty persons of the jury, the court in any of these cases shall, notwithstanding, proceed to the trial of the persons so challenging, &c.

This act of congress having expressly recognized the right of peremptory challenge in the one case of the number of thirty-five jurors, and in the other of twenty, they should be regarded as excepted out of the power conferred upon the courts to regulate the subject by rule or order under the aforesaid act of 1840.

The right of challenge in the cases specified in the act of 1790, in respect to the number of jurors, is derived from the common law, which allowed thirty-five in cases of treason, and twenty in cases of felony. 4 Bl. Com. 354, 355 ; 12 Wheat. 483.

That law also gave to the king a qualified right of challenge in these cases, which had the effect to set aside the juror till the panel was gone through with, without assigning cause, and if there was not a full jury without the person so challenged, then the cause must be assigned or the juror would be sworn.

The court is of opinion that the right of challenge by the prisoner

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recognized by the act of 1790, does not necessarily draw along with it this qualified right, existing at common law, by the government; and that, unless the laws or usages of the State, adopted by rule under the act of 1840, allow it on behalf of the prosecution, it should be rejected, conforming in this respect the practice to the State law.

It does not appear in the case before us, whether or not the court below had adopted the State law under the act of 1840, as it existed at or previous to the proceedings certified, and [ \* 591 ] \* hence we are not enabled to express any opinion upon the particular question certified. But the opinion expressed upon the general question will enable the court below to dispose of the case, without any amendment of the record, or further hearing of the case.

The cause is, therefore, remanded to the court below to proceed according to the foregoing opinion.

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SUSAN E. CONNER, Plaintiff in Error, v. WILLIAM ST. JOHN ELLIOTT  
and others.

18 H. 591.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW—RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP.

1. The clause of the constitution of the United States which declares that "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens of the several States," applies only to such privileges and immunities as grow out of citizenship.
2. The rights of a community of acquets between married persons, which the law of Louisiana attaches to the contract of marriage within that State, when the parties are married there, or reside there when the acquets are made, are not privileges and immunities of citizenship, but attach to the contract or relation of marriage without reference to the citizenship or alienage of the parties.
3. Hence a widow, married and domiciled during her married life in the State of Mississippi, is not entitled by the laws of Louisiana, nor by the above provision of the federal constitution, to a community in her husband's acquets, though these are made and located within Louisiana, and administered in her courts, and though the wife was a native-born citizen of Louisiana.
4. This court will not undertake the difficult and delicate task of giving a general or comprehensive definition of the rights and privileges guaranteed by the above clause of the constitution, because it is deemed safer and more in accord with judicial propriety to leave its meaning to be determined in each case as it shall arise.

THIS is a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Louisiana, and the case is clearly stated in the opinion.

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*Mr. Henderson*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for defendants.

Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court.

In the course of proceedings which were had in Louisiana, under the laws and in the courts of that State, to determine the rights of parties interested in the succession of Henry L. Conner, deceased, a citizen of the State of Mississippi, his widow, who is the plaintiff in error in this case, filed in the district court of the tenth judicial district of the State of Louisiana, a petition, claiming to be entitled to her rights of marital community, as they exist under the laws of that State. These rights having \*been denied [\* 592] by the district court, an appeal was prosecuted to the supreme court; and it was there held that inasmuch as the marriage through which the appellant claimed was not in fact contracted in Louisiana, nor in contemplation of a matrimonial domicile in that State, and the spouses had never resided therein, the wife was not a partner in community with the husband by force of the laws of Louisiana.

On this writ of error, it neither is nor can be denied that the supreme court of Louisiana has correctly declared and applied the law of that State to this case. But it is insisted that this law deprives the plaintiff in error, a citizen of the State of Mississippi, of one of the privileges of a citizen in the State of Louisiana, and therefore is in contravention of the first clause of the second section of the fourth article of the constitution, which provides that "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States."

It appears upon the record that this question was raised by the pleadings, and presented to and decided by the highest court of the State; it is therefore open here, upon this writ of error, for final determination by this court, under the twenty-fifth section of the judiciary act of 1789, 1 Stats. at Large, 85.

It appears that the plaintiff in error, though a native-born citizen of Louisiana, was married in the State of Mississippi, while under age, with the consent of her guardian, to a citizen of the latter State, and that their domicile, during the duration of their marriage, was in Mississippi. But, while it continued, the husband acquired a plantation, and other real property, in Louisiana. If the marriage had been contracted in Louisiana, the code of that State, then in force, code of 1808, art. 3, § 4, would have superinduced the rights of community. And at the time when the prop-



erty in question was purchased by the husband, in 1841, the code of 1825, then in force, contained the following articles:

“Art. 2369. Every marriage contracted in this State superinduces, of right, partnership or community of acquets or gains, if there be no stipulation to the contrary.”

“Art. 2370. A marriage contracted in this State, between persons who afterwards come here to live, is also subjected to the community of acquets with respect to such property as is acquired after their arrival.”

And it is insisted that, as these articles gave to what is termed in the argument a Louisiana widow the right of marital community, the laws of the State could not constitutionally deny, as it is admitted they did in fact deny, the same rights to all widows, citizens of the United States, though not married in [ \* 593 ] \* Louisiana, or residing there during the marriage, and while the property in question was acquired.

In other words, that, as the laws of Louisiana provide that a contract of marriage made in that State, or the residence of persons there in the relation created by marriage, shall give rise to certain rights on the part of each in property acquired within that State, by force of the article of the constitution above recited, all citizens of the United States, wherever married and residing, obtain the same rights in property acquired in that State during the marriage. We do not deem it needful to attempt to define the meaning of the word privileges in this clause of the constitution. It is safer, and more in accordance with the duty of a judicial tribunal, to leave its meaning to be determined, in each case, upon a view of the particular rights asserted and denied therein. And especially is this true, when we are dealing with so broad a provision, involving matters not only of great delicacy and importance, but which are of such a character, that any merely abstract definition could scarcely be correct; and a failure to make it so would certainly produce mischief.

It is sufficient for this case to say that, according to the express words and clear meaning of this clause, no privileges are secured by it, except those which belong to citizenship. Rights, attached by the law to contracts, by reason of the place where such contracts are made or executed, wholly irrespective of the citizenship of the parties to those contracts, cannot be deemed “privileges of a citizen,” within the meaning of the constitution.

Of that character are the rights now in question. They are incidents, ingrafted by the law of the State on the contract of marriage. And, in obedience to that principle of universal juris-

prudence, which requires a contract to be governed by the law of the place where it is made and to be performed, the law of Louisiana undertakes to control these incidents of a contract of marriage made within the State by persons domiciled there; but leaves such contracts, made elsewhere, to be governed by the laws of the places where they may be entered into. In this, there is no departure from any sound principle, and there can be no just cause of complaint.

The law of the State further provides, that if married persons come to Louisiana to reside, and acquire property there during such residence, they shall be deemed nuptial partners in respect to such property; but if the domicile of the marriage continues out of Louisiana, the relative rights of the married persons may be regulated by the laws of the place of such domicile, even in respect to property acquired by one of them in Louisiana.

\* That the first of these rules, which extends the laws of [ \* 594 ] the State to married persons coming to reside and acquiring property therein, is a proper exercise of legislative power, has not been questioned. But it is insisted that the last, which leaves the rights of non-resident married persons in respect to property in Louisiana to be governed by the laws of their domicile, deprives the wife of her rights as a citizen, in property acquired by the husband during marriage in Louisiana. The answer to this has been already indicated. The laws of Louisiana affix certain incidents to a contract of marriage there made, or there partly or wholly executed, not because those who enter into such contracts are citizens of the State, but because they there make or perform the contract. And they refuse to affix these incidents to such contracts, made and executed elsewhere, not because the married persons are not citizens of Louisiana, but because their contract being made and performed under the laws of some other State or country, it is deemed proper not to interfere, by Louisiana laws, with the relations of married persons out of that State. Whether persons contracting marriage in Louisiana are citizens of that or some other State, or aliens, the law equally applies to their contract; and so, whether persons married and domiciled elsewhere, be or be not citizens or aliens, the law fails to regulate their rights. The law does not discriminate between citizens of the State and other persons; it discriminates between contracts only. Such discrimination has no connection with the clause in the constitution now in question. If a law of Louisiana were to give to the partners *inter sese* certain peculiar rights, provided they should reside within the State, and carry on the partnership trade there, we think it could

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not be maintained that all copartners, citizens of the United States, residing and doing business elsewhere, must have those peculiar rights by force of the constitution of the United States, any more than it could be maintained that, because a law of Louisiana gives certain damages on protested bills of exchange, drawn or indorsed within that State, the same damages must be recoverable on bills drawn elsewhere in favor of citizens of the United States.

The rights asserted in this case, before the supreme court of Louisiana, are not privileges of citizenship; consequently, there is no error in the judgment of that court, which is hereby affirmed.

18h 696  
L-ed 518  
36f 836

WILLIAM C. PEASE, Plaintiff in Error, v. JOHN PECK.

18 H. 595.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MANUSCRIPT OF STATUTES AND PRINTED PUBLICATION—LONG  
ACQUIESCENCE OF COURTS AND PEOPLE.

1. The laws framed by the commissioners for the territory of the northwest, under the ordinance of 1787, left out the words "beyond the seas" in the disability clause of the statute of limitation, but in the publication made by order of congress they were included.
2. *Quere*: Whether thirty years' acquiescence in the law, as published by the courts and the people, may not be taken as settling the law in that form?
3. However this may be, when the legislative body of the State have, in two revisions of its statutes, adopted the form as published, these revisions being intended to embrace alterations and amendments, this must be taken to be the law of the land.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Michigan.

The case is well stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Emmons, and Mr. Grey*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Badger and Mr. Carlisle*, for defendant.

Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

Peck, the plaintiff below, declared against Pease in an action of debt on a judgment obtained in the circuit court of the territory (now State) of Michigan, at the term of January, 1836. The defendant pleaded the statute of limitations of eight years; to which the plaintiff replied that he did not at any time reside in the State of Michigan, but in parts "beyond seas," to wit, in the State of New York.

The defendant demurred to the replication.

The objection to this replication is not to the construction of the statute which is assumed by the plaintiff to govern the case, or an allegation that, according to the settled construction of the words, "beyond seas," the replication is defective. But it is intended to deny that the statute of limitations pleaded has any such provision in it. The question is, therefore, not what is the construction of an admitted statute, but what is the statute. For each party admits that if the statute be as claimed by his opponent, his construction of it is correct.

By the ordinance of 1787, "for the government of the territory of the United States northwest of the river Ohio," it is provided "that the governor and judges, or a majority of them, shall adopt and publish in the district such laws of the original States, criminal and civil, as may be necessary and best suited to the circumstances of the district, and report them to congress from time to time, which laws shall be in force in the district until \* the organization of the general assembly therein, [ \* 596 ] unless disapproved of by congress; but afterwards the legislature shall have authority to alter them, as they shall see fit."

By an act of congress of 24th April, 1820, 3 Stats. at Large, 565, the laws of Michigan territory in force, were ordered to be printed under the direction of the secretary of state, and a competent number distributed to the people of said territory.

In the volume of the laws so published by authority in that year, is a statute of limitations, which the governor and judges certify to have been "adopted from the laws of the State of Vermont, as far as necessary and suitable to the circumstances of the territory of Michigan."

The eighth section of this act provides that "actions of debt or *scire facias* on judgment must be brought within eight years after the rendition of the judgment," &c.

The 10th section enacts that "this act shall not extend to bar any infant, *feme covert*, person imprisoned, or beyond seas, or without the United States, or *non compos mentis*," &c.

On the 21st of April, 1825, the legislature of the territory, which had been now organized, appointed certain individuals to revise the laws of the territory. They were required "to examine all the laws then in force, to revise, consolidate, and digest them, making such alterations or additions as they may deem expedient."

On the 27th of December, 1826, the commissioners report to the legislature the statutes as revised by them, stating that considerable alterations and some additions had been made by them. These laws received the sanction of the legislature, and were pub-

lished by authority, in 1827. By this it appears that they adopted the statute of limitations, and the 10th section thereof, from the published acts of 1820, and as stated above. Again, in 1833, "the laws of the territory of Michigan were condensed, arranged, and passed by the fifth legislative council," and were again published under authority of the legislature. The 10th section is again stated in the same words.

The law, as thus published, has been acknowledged by the people and the courts, and received a harmonious interpretation for thirty years. But it has lately been discovered that the text or original manuscript adopted by the governor and judges in 1820, differs from the printed statutes, as published by authority, as to the words of this 10th section. It reads as follows: "Persons imprisoned or without the United States,"—having the words "beyond seas," erased; whereas the printed statutes retain the words "beyond seas," and add or interpolate the word "or."

It is no doubt true, as a general rule, that the mistake [ \* 597 ] of a \* transcriber or printer cannot change the law; and that when the statutes published by authority are found to differ from the original on file among the public archives, that the courts will receive the latter as containing the expressed will of the legislature in preference to the former. Yet, as the people who are governed by the laws, and the courts who administer them, practically know the law only from the authorized publication of them, the propriety of recurring to ancient, altered, and erased manuscripts, for the purpose of changing their construction after a lapse of thirty years, and after their construction has been long settled by the courts, and has entered as an element into the contracts and business of the citizens, may well be doubted. The reception and long acquiescence in them, as printed and distributed by authority, by those who had it always in their power to alter or annul them, and did not, may justly be treated as a ratification of them in that form by the sovereign people. The maxim *communis error facit jus*, though said to be dangerous in its application, "because it sets up a misconception of the law, for destruction of the law," might here find a safe and proper application, and make it one of the "some cases" in which it is said the law so favors the public good, that it will permit a common error to pass for right. Noy's Maxims, 37, 4 Inst. 240.

But we need not have recourse to any doubtful speculations in order to arrive at a satisfactory solution of this question. The laws reported by the governor and judges were intended to be temporary, and to remain in force only till the territory should be

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fully organized, as provided by the ordinance. After such organization, "the legislature is authorized to alter them as they see fit." Accordingly, when the territory of Michigan was so organized, by the election of such council, legislature, or "general assembly," they proceeded at once to have a code or digest of the laws reported for the future government of the territory, and they adopt, reject, alter, and add to, the former laws "as they saw fit." After the promulgation of their code, that of the governor and judges is entirely supplanted, and has no longer any force or effect whatever. Those who look for the rule of action which is to govern them, seek it no longer in the code which has been abrogated, and, having effected its temporary purpose, has become obsolete and null, but in that which has the sanction of their own legislature. The declaration of the legislative will is to be sought from documents originating with them, or published by their sanction. The original documents reported by the judges may be the best evidence of what statutes they intended temporarily to adopt, and what was their will and intention, but cannot be received as any evidence of the will and intention of a legislature ordaining a new and permanent \*system of laws [\*598] under powers delegated to them by congress and the people of the territory. It may well be presumed, that the legislature had no knowledge of this newly discovered erasure in the original, and supposed interpolation in the printed copy of the laws, reported by the judges in 1820; and that they adopted the law as they found it in the copy—printed by authority, and "distributed to the people of the territory." They certainly had power to do so, and having done so, it would be folly to say that they intended to adopt some other words as the expression of their will, to be found only in a document reposing in the crypts of the secretary's office, and which they had probably never seen. But if we assume that they had seen this document, and were aware of its discrepancy from the published law, then their adoption of the latter would be conclusive. On either hypothesis this original document can furnish no evidence of the intention or will of the legislature. It must be remembered that there is no allegation or pretense, that the acts published by authority of the legislature differ from the original reported to them and adopted by them.

That is the only original, if there be any such in existence, by which the printed copy could be corrected or amended. But to correct or amend the declared will of the legislature, as published under their authority, by the words of a document which did



not emanate from them, which it is most probable they never saw, or if seen, they did not see fit to adopt where it differed from the published statutes, would be, in our opinion, judicial legislation, and arbitrary assumption.

The only argument which has been urged, which could lead us to doubt the justness of this conclusion is, that the supreme court of Michigan have, it is said, come to a different decision on this question. We entertain the highest respect for that learned court, and in any question affecting the construction of their own laws, where we entertained any doubt, would be glad to be relieved from doubt and responsibility by reposing on their decision. There are, it is true, many *dicta* to be found in our decisions, averring that the courts of the United States are bound to follow the decisions of the State courts on the construction of their own laws. But although this may be a correct, yet a rather strong expression of a general rule, it cannot be received as the enunciation of a maxim of universal application. Accordingly, our reports furnish many cases of exceptions to it. In all cases where there is a settled construction of the laws of a State, by its highest judicature, established by admitted precedent, it is the practice of the courts of the United States to receive and adopt it without criticism or further in-

quiry. But when this court have first decided a question [ \* 599 ] \* arising under State laws, we do not feel bound to sur-

render our convictions, on account of a contrary subsequent decision of a State court, as in the case of *Rowan v. Runnels*, 5 How. 139. When the decisions of the State court are not consistent, we do not feel bound to follow the last, if it is contrary to our own convictions—and much more is this the case, where, after a long course of consistent decisions, some new light suddenly springs up, or an excited public opinion has elicited new doctrines, subversive of former safe precedent. Cases may exist also, when a cause is got up in a State court for the very purpose of anticipating our decision of a question known to be pending in this court. Nor do we feel bound in any case in which a point is first raised in the courts of the United States, and has been decided in a circuit court, to reverse that decision contrary to our own convictions, in order to conform to a State decision made in the meantime. Such decisions have not the character of established precedent declarative of the settled law of a State.

Parties who, by the constitution and laws of the United States, have a right to have their controversies decided in their tribunals, have a right to demand the unbiased judgment of the court. The theory upon which jurisdiction is conferred on the courts of the

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United States, in controversies between citizens of different States, has its foundation in the supposition that, possibly, the State tribunal might not be impartial between their own citizens and foreigners.

The question presented in the present case is one in which the interests of citizens of other States, come directly in conflict with those of the citizens of Michigan. The territorial law in question had been received and acted upon for thirty years, in the words of the published statute. It had received a settled construction by the courts of the United States as well as those of the State. It had entered as an element into the contracts and business of men. On a sudden, a manuscript statute differing from the known public law, is disinterred from the lumber room of obsolete documents; a new law is promulgated by judicial construction, which, by retroaction, destroys vested rights of property of citizens of other States, while it protects the citizens of Michigan from the payment of admitted debts.

We think that such a case peculiarly calls upon us not to surrender our clear convictions and unbiased judgment to the authority of the new State decision, and to render a judgment in favor of the plaintiff, which we do by affirming the judgment of the circuit court.

Mr. Justice DANIEL and Mr. Justice CAMPBELL dissented.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL, dissenting.

\* The decision of this case depends upon the following [ \* 600 ] facts. The territorial government of Michigan was organized under the ordinance of 1787, for the government of the northwest territory. The governor and judges of that territory "were authorized to adopt and publish such of the laws of the original States, criminal and civil, as may be necessary and best suited to the circumstances of the territory, and report them to congress from time to time; which laws shall remain in force until the organization of the general assembly therein, unless disapproved by congress. In 1820, the statute of limitations of Vermont was adopted by the council. That statute contains an exception which reads, "persons imprisoned, or beyond seas, without United States."

The copy filed by the judges, and now found in the archives of Michigan, reads, "persons imprisoned or without the United States." the words "beyond seas" being erased in that copy. It is apparent that the two statutes are to the same effect.

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The copy, as it is now found in the archives of Michigan, was reported to congress. The printed publication of the laws was as follows: "persons imprisoned or beyond seas, or without the United States." This error has been continued through the various publications of the laws of Michigan until the present time. But I have not been able to find that the statute, as published, has ever received the sanction of the legislative department of the government. The act, in the various reports and references of the legislature, has been described as an act of a particular title, or as included in the general term of "laws in force," without identifying it as the act published in any of the compilations which have been circulated through the State. I have no evidence of any series of decisions of the courts of Michigan on this subject; none was produced on the argument; and the public opinion that may exist in Michigan as to what makes its statute law, must be a most fallible rule of judgment. The statute laws of a State exist in a permanent form, and are unchangeable, except by public authority, and are not to be ascertained from any popular impression on the subject. If any mischief has arisen from the vicious publications, it belongs to the legislative authority of the State to afford the indemnity. It is admitted that the statute, as contained in the original roll, will bar the plaintiff's claim, and that he is within the exception contained in the printed laws. The question for the court is, what is the evidence on which it should depend to prove the existence of the statute of a State? The act of congress of the 26th of May, 1790, to prescribe the mode in which the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings, in each State shall be authenticated, so as to take effect in every other [ \* 601 ] State, provides, \* "that the acts of the legislatures of the several States shall be authenticated by having the seal of their respective States affixed thereto," 1 Stats. at Large, 122.

This court, in the *United States v. Amedy*, 11 Wheat. 392, said, "no other or further formality is required; and the seal itself is supposed to import perfect verity. In *Patterson v. Winn*, 5 Pet. 233, the court said of the exemplification of a grant, that it is admissible in evidence, as being record proof of as high nature as the original. It is a recognition, in the most solemn form, by the government itself, of the validity of its own grant, under its own seal, and imports absolute verity as matter of record." We have before us an exemplified copy of the act of Michigan, and from that evidence we learn what is preserved in her archives as the act adopted by the governor and judges in 1820, and referred to in the subsequent reports and acts of her legislature as "An act for the

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limitation of suits on penal statutes, criminal prosecutions, and actions at law," adopted May 15, 1820.

The authorities are explicit to the effect that this evidence is the highest that can be offered of a statute. That the seal of the State, when properly affixed, is conclusive evidence of the existence of a statute, is the result of several State authorities. *United States v. Johns*, 4 Dall. 412; *Henthorn v. Doe*, 1 Blackf. 157; *State v. Carr*, 5 N. H. 367. The supreme court of Michigan have had this subject under consideration, and after repeated arguments and great deliberation, have decided that this printed statute does not form a part of the laws of that State, but that the original roll must be received as the exact record of the legislative will. The question is so entirely of a domestic character, and belongs so particularly to the constituted authorities of the State to determine, that I cannot bring myself to oppose their conclusion on the subject.

In my opinion the judgment of the circuit court is erroneous, and should be reversed.

This cause came on to be heard on the transcript of the record from the circuit court of the United States for the district of Michigan, and was argued by counsel; on consideration whereof, it is now here ordered and adjudged by this court that the judgment of the said circuit court in this cause be and the same is hereby affirmed, with costs and interests, until paid, at the same rate per annum that similar judgments bear in the courts of the State of Michigan.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL and Mr. Justice DANIEL dissenting.

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JACOB STRADER and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. CHRISTOPHER GRAHAM.

18 H. 602.

COSTS.

Where a case is dismissed in this court for want of jurisdiction, no judgment for costs can be rendered.

THIS case was brought here from the court of appeals of Kentucky, by writ of error, under the 25th section of the judiciary act. The question involved in the record was "whether slaves who had been permitted by their masters to pass occasionally from Kentucky into

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Ohio, acquired thereby a right to freedom on their return to Kentucky.”

This court held that the question thus decided by the Kentucky court was not one of those embraced in the section above mentioned, and dismissed the writ. See 10 How. 82; 18 Curtis, 385.

*Mr. Crittenden* now moved for a judgment for costs in favor of the defendant in error in that case.

*Order of the Court.*

Whereupon it is now here considered by the court, that this court cannot give a judgment for costs in a case dismissed for want of jurisdiction; and it appearing to this court that this cause has been dismissed for want of jurisdiction, it is thereupon now here ordered by the court that the said motion be and the same is hereby overruled.

**DECISIONS**  
**OF THE**  
**SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES,**  
**DECEMBER TERM, 1856.**

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**JUSTICES OF THE COURT.**

<b>HON. ROGER B. TANEY, CHIEF JUSTICE.</b>	
<b>HON. JOHN MCLEAN,</b>	}
<b>HON. JAMES M. WAYNE,</b>	
<b>HON. JOHN CATRON,</b>	
<b>HON. PETER V. DANIEL,</b>	
<b>HON. SAMUEL NELSON,</b>	
<b>HON. ROBERT C. GRIER,</b>	
<b>HON. BENJAMIN R. CURTIS,</b>	
<b>HON. JOHN A. CAMPBELL,</b>	
<b>CALEB CUSHING, ATTORNEY GENERAL.</b>	
<b>WILLIAM THOMAS CARROLL, CLERK.</b>	
<b>BENJAMIN C. HOWARD, REPORTER.</b>	
<b>JONAH D. HOOVER, MARSHAL.</b>	

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**JEAN LOUIS PREVOST, Plaintiff in Error, v. CHARLES E. GRENEAUX,**  
**Treasurer of the State of Louisiana.**

19 H. 1.

**TREATY WITH FRANCE—TAX ON SUCCESSION.**

1. The 7th article of the treaty with France, proclaimed August 12, 1853, which relates to the right to hold and inherit property by French citizens, has relation only to rights of inheritance thereafter acquired.
2. The tax of the State of Louisiana upon successions is due upon the event of the death and vesting of the property in the successor. Hence, where the ancestor dies in 1848, the right to the succession tax vested in the State, and could not be affected by the treaty.
3. *Quere*: Would the treaty be obligatory on the State, as to future successions, if their own courts had not decided that it was?

**THIS is a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Louisiana, and the facts are well stated in the opinion.**



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Prevost v. Greneaux.

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*Mr. Janin*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for defendant.

[ \* 6 ] \* Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Louisiana. It appears that a certain François Marie Prevost, an inhabitant of that State, died in the year 1848 intestate and without issue, and possessed of property to a considerable amount. He left a widow; and, as no person appeared claiming as heir of the deceased, the widow, according to the laws of the State, was put in possession of the whole of the property by the proper authorities, in December, 1851. She died in March, 1853.

In January, 1854, Jean Louis Prevost, a French subject, residing in France, presented himself by his agent in Louisiana as the brother and sole heir of François Marie Prevost, and established his claim by a regular judicial proceeding in court.

The laws of Louisiana impose a tax of ten per cent. on the value of all property inherited in that State by any person not domiciliated there, and not being a citizen of any State or Territory of the United States.

This tax is disputed by the plaintiff in error, upon the ground that the law of Louisiana is inconsistent with the treaty or consular convention with France. This treaty was signed on the 23d of February, 1853, ratified by the United States on the 1st of April, 1853, exchanged on the 11th of August, 1853, and proclaimed by the president on the 12th of August, 1853.

The 7th article of this treaty, so far as concerns this case, is in the following words:

“In all the States of the Union whose laws permit it, so long and to the same extent as the said laws shall remain in force, Frenchmen shall enjoy the right of possessing personal and real property by the same title and in the same manner as the citizens of the United States. They shall be free to dispose of it as they may please, either gratuitously or for value received, by donation, testament, or otherwise, just as those citizens themselves; and in no case shall they be subjected to taxes on transfers, inheritance, or any others, different from those paid by the latter, or to taxes which shall not be equally imposed.”

Proceedings were instituted in the State courts by the plaintiff in error to try this question, which were ultimately brought before the supreme court of the State. And that court decided that the right to the tax was complete, and vested in the State upon the

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Prevost v. Greneaux.

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death of François Marie Prevost, and was not affected by the treaty with France subsequently made.

\* We can see no valid objection to this judgment. The [ \* 7 ] plaintiff in error, in his petition to be recognized as heir, claimed title to all the separate property of François M. Prevost and his widow, then in the hands of the curator, and of all his portion of the community property, and of all the fruits and revenues of his succession from the day of the death of his brother. And, in adjudicating upon this claim, the court recognized the rights of the appellant, as set forth in his petition, and decided that he became entitled to the property, as heir, immediately upon the death of Fr. M. Prevost.

Now, if the property vested in him at that time, it could vest only in the manner, upon the conditions authorized by the laws of the State. And, by the laws of the State, as they then stood, it vested in him, subject to a tax of ten per cent., payable to the State. And certainly a treaty, subsequently made by the United States with France, could not divest rights of property already vested in the State, even if the words of the treaty had imported such an intention. But the words of the article, which we have already set forth, clearly apply to cases happening afterwards—not to cases where the party appeared, after the treaty, to assert his rights, but to cases where the right afterwards accrued. And so it was decided by the supreme court of the State, and, we think, rightly. The constitutionality of the law is not disputed, that point having been settled in this court in the case of *Mayer v. Grima*, 8 How. 490.

In affirming this judgment, it is proper to say that the obligation of the treaty and its operation in the State, after it was made, depend upon the laws of Louisiana. The treaty does not claim for the United States the right of controlling the succession of real or personal property in a State. And its operation is expressly limited “to the States of the Union whose laws permit it, so long and to the same extent as those laws shall remain in force.” And, as there is no act of the legislature of Louisiana repealing this law and accepting the provisions of the treaty, so as to secure to her citizens similar rights in France, this court might feel some difficulty in saying that it was repealed by this treaty, if the State court had not so expounded its own law, and held that Louisiana was one of the States in which the proposed arrangements of the treaty were to be carried into effect.

Upon the whole, we think there is no error in the judgment of the State court, and it must therefore be affirmed.

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Morgan v. Curtenius.

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BENJAMIN F. MORGAN, Plaintiff in Error, v. ALFRED G. CURTENIUS  
and JOHN L. GRISWOLD.

19 H. 8.

OMISSION IN THE TRANSCRIPT.

This court will, of its own motion, award a *certiorari* after a case has been submitted, if it discovers that an important paper, referred to in the bill of exceptions, is omitted in the transcript.

THIS was a writ of error to the circuit court for the northern district of Illinois.

It was submitted on printed argument by *Mr. Washburne*, for plaintiff in error.

No counsel appeared for defendants.

Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the court.

Upon examining the transcript of the record filed in this case, we find that it is imperfect, and that a paper has been omitted which may be important to the decision of the matter in controversy between the parties.

The bill of exceptions upon which the cause is brought before this court, after stating that the defendants read in evidence the deed from Bogardas to Underhill, under which they claim title, proceeds in the following words:

“The defendants next offered in evidence to the jury a certificate of the register of the land office at Quincy, dated ———, which is in the words and figures following, to wit.”

But the certificate thus referred to is not inserted in the exception, nor its contents stated in any part of the transcript. And as this paper was offered in evidence by the defendants, it must have been deemed material to their defense; and the court think it would not be just to them to proceed to final judgment, without having this paper before us.

And as the defendants have no counsel appearing in their behalf in this court, the court of its own motion order the case to be continued, and a *certiorari* issued in the usual form to the circuit court, directing it to supply the omission above mentioned, and return a full and correct transcript to this court, on or before the first day of the next term.

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*Ex parte Secombe.*

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## EX PARTE DAVID A. SECOMBE.

19 H. 9.

## MANDAMUS—DISBARRING ATTORNEY—JURISDICTION OF THIS COURT OVER INFERIOR COURTS.

1. The statute of the Territory of Minnesota concerning the admission and removal of attorneys differs but little from the common law, and leaves those matters very largely in the discretion of the courts.
2. But this must be a judicial discretion, and not an arbitrary, unregulated exercise of power.
3. An order dismissing an attorney for conduct in the presence of the court is the exercise of a judicial discretion vested by law in the court; and though the judgment of removal was without notice or hearing, this court cannot review that judgment and restore the party on a petition for a writ of *mandamus*.

THE case came before this court by a petition on the part of Secombe, praying to be restored to his office and function as an attorney of the supreme court of the Territory of Minnesota. This petition stated that he had been disbarred by an order of said court, without notice and without a hearing, the first knowledge he had of the matter being received after the order of dismissal. He alleged that it was without cause, and that the order was made without jurisdiction.

The petition was sworn to, and was accompanied by a notice duly served on the judges of the supreme court of the Territory, and by a certified copy of the order of the court dismissing petitioner, which is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Badger* argued in support of the motion.

\* Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the [ \* 13 ] court.

A *mandamus* has been moved for, by David A. Secombe, to be directed to the judges of the supreme court of the Territory of Minnesota, commanding them to vacate and set aside an order of the court, passed at January term, 1856, whereby the said Secombe was removed from his office as an attorney and counsellor of that court.

In the case of *Tillinghast v. Conkling*, which came before this court at January term, 1829, a similar motion was overruled by this court. The case is not reported; but a brief written opinion remains on the files of the court, in which the court says that the motion is overruled, upon the ground that it had not jurisdiction in the case.

The removal of the attorney and counsellor, in that case, took

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*Ex parte Secombe.*

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place in a district court of the United States, exercising the powers of a circuit court; and, in a court of that character, the relations between the court and the attorneys and counsellors who practice in it, and their respective rights and duties, are regulated by the common law. And it has been well settled, by the rules and practice of common-law courts, that it rests exclusively with the court to determine who is qualified to become one of its officers, as an attorney and counsellor, and for what cause he ought to be removed. The power, however, is not an arbitrary and despotic one, to be exercised at the pleasure of the court, or from passion, prejudice, or personal hostility; but it is the duty of the court to exercise and regulate it by a sound and just judicial discretion, whereby the rights and independence of the bar may be as scrupulously guarded and maintained by the court, as the rights and dignity of the court itself.

It has, however, been urged at the bar, that a much broader discretionary power is exercised in courts acting upon the rules of the common law than can be lawfully exercised in the territorial court of Minnesota; because the legislature of the Territory has, by statute, prescribed the conditions upon which a person [ \* 14 ] may entitle himself to admission as an \*attorney and counsellor in its courts, and also enumerated the offenses for which he may be removed, and prescribed the mode of proceeding against him. And the relator complains that it appears by the transcript from the record, and the certificate of the clerk, which he filed with his petition for a *mandamus*, that in the sentence of removal he is not found guilty of any specific offense which would, under the statute of the Territory, justify his removal, and had no notice of any charge against him, and no opportunity of being heard in his defense.

It is true that, in the statutes of Minnesota, rules are prescribed for the admission of attorneys and counsellors, and also for their removal. But it will appear, upon examination, that, in describing some of the offenses for which they may be removed, the statute has done but little, if anything, more than enact the general rules upon which the courts of common law have always acted; and have not, in any material degree, narrowed the discretion they exercised. Indeed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to enumerate and define, with legal precision, every offense for which an attorney or counsellor ought to be removed. And the legislature, for the most part, can only prescribe general rules and principles to be carried into execution by the court with judicial discretion and justice as cases may arise.

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*Ex parte Secombe.*

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The revised code of Minnesota (ch. 93, sec. 7, subdivision 2,) makes it the duty of the attorney and counsellor "to maintain the respect due to courts of justice and judicial officers."

The 19th section of the same chapter enumerates certain offenses for which an attorney or counsellor may be removed; and, among others, enacts that he may be removed for a willful violation of any of the provisions of section 7, above mentioned. And, in its sentence of removal, the court say that the relator, being one of the attorneys and counsellors of the court, had, by his acts as such, in open court, at the term at which he was removed, been guilty of a willful violation of the provision above mentioned, and also of a violation of that part of his official oath by which he was sworn to conduct himself with fidelity to the court.

The statute, it will be observed, does not attempt to specify the acts which shall be deemed disrespectful to the court or the judicial officers. It must therefore rest with the court to determine what acts amount to a violation of this provision; and this is a judicial power vested in the court by the legislature. The removal of the relator, therefore, for the cause above mentioned, was the act of a court done in the exercise of a judicial discretion which the law authorized and required \*it to exercise. And [ \*15 ] the other cause assigned for the removal stands on the same ground.

It is not necessary to inquire whether this decision of the territorial court can be reviewed here in any other form of proceeding. But the court are of opinion that he is not entitled to a remedy by *mandamus*. Undoubtedly the judgment of an inferior court may be reversed in a superior one which possesses appellate power over it, and a mandate be issued, commanding it to carry into execution the judgment of the appellate tribunal. But it cannot be reviewed and reversed in this form of proceeding, however erroneous it may be or supposed to be. And we are not aware of any case where a *mandamus* has issued to an inferior tribunal, commanding it to reverse or annul its decision, where the decision was in its nature a judicial act, and within the scope of its jurisdiction and discretion.

These principles apply with equal force to the proceedings adopted by the court in making the removal.

The statute of Minnesota, under which the court acted, directs that the proceedings to remove an attorney or counsellor must be taken by the court, on its own motion, for matter within its knowledge; or may be taken on the information of another. And, in the latter case, it requires that the information should be in writing,



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Shaffer v. Scudday.

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and notice be given to the party, and a day given to him to answer and deny the sufficiency of the accusation, or deny its truth.

In this case, it appears that the offenses charged were committed in open court, and the proceedings to remove the relator were taken by the court upon its own motion. And it appears by his affidavit that he had no notice that the court intended to proceed against him; had no opportunity of being heard in his defense, and did not know that he was dismissed from the bar until the term was closed, and the court had adjourned to the next term.

Now, in proceeding to remove the relator, the court was necessarily called on to decide whether, in a case where the offense was committed in open court, and the proceeding was had by the court on its own motion, the statute of Minnesota required that notice should be given to the party, and an opportunity afforded him to be heard in his defense. The court, it seems, were of opinion that no notice was necessary, and proceeded without it; and, whether this decision was erroneous or not, yet it was made in the exercise of judicial authority, where the subject-matter was within their jurisdiction, and it cannot therefore be revised and annulled in this form of proceeding.

[ \*16 ] \*Upon this view of the subject, it would be useless to grant a rule to show cause; for if the territorial court made a return stating what they had done, in the precise form in which the sentence of dismissal now appears in the papers exhibited by the relator, a peremptory *mandamus* could not issue to restore him to the office he has lost.

The motion must therefore be overruled.

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WILLIAM A. SHAFFER, Plaintiff in Error, v. JAMES A. SCUDDAY.

19 H. 16.

JURISDICTION UNDER 25TH SECTION OF JUDICIARY ACT.

1. Where both parties claim the same land under different patents from the State, and the State court did not decide the case on any construction of the acts of congress, this court cannot review its judgment.
2. Nor does the opinion of the secretary of the interior, that one of the claims was improperly located, vary the proposition.

THE case, which is a writ of error to the supreme court of Louisiana, is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for plaintiff in error.

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Shaffer v. Scudday.

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*Mr. Taylor*, (who raised the question of jurisdiction,) for defendant.

\* *Mr. Chief Justice TANEY* delivered the opinion of the [ \* 18 ] court.

This is a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Louisiana.

It appears that a petitory action was brought by Scudday, the defendant in error, against Shaffer, the plaintiff in error, to recover a quarter section of land described in the pleadings.

The defendant in error derives his title in the following manner: By the eighth section of an act of congress of the 4th September, 1841, the government of the United States granted to each of the several States specified in the act, and among them to Louisiana, 500,000 acres of land, for the purposes of internal improvement. The act provided that the selections of the land were to be made in such manner as the legislature of the State should direct, the locations to be made on any public lands, except such as were or might be reserved from sale by any law of congress, or proclamation of the president of the United States. The ninth section of the act provided that the net proceeds of the sales of the lands so granted should be applied to objects of internal improvement within the State, such as roads, railways, bridges, canals, and improvement of water-courses and draining of swamps. An act of the legislature of Louisiana of 1844 provided that warrants for the location of the lands should be sold in the same manner as the lands were located; and it was made the duty of the governor to issue patents for the lands located by warrants, whenever he should be satisfied that they had been properly located. The defendant in error, being the holder of such a warrant, located it on \*the [ \* 19 ] land claimed in the suit. The location having been approved by the secretary of the interior, and a certificate to that effect granted by the register, the governor of Louisiana issued a patent to the plaintiff, bearing date 12th November, 1852.

The opposing title of plaintiff in error is derived under an act of congress of March 2d, 1849, and certain acts of the legislature of the State, passed to carry into effect the act of congress. The first section of the act of congress of 1849 declares, "that to aid the State of Louisiana in constructing the necessary levees and drains to reclaim the swamp and overflowed lands therein, the whole of the swamp and overflowed lands which are or may be found unfit for cultivating, shall be, and the same are hereby, granted to the State."

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The second section provides, that as soon as the secretary of the treasury shall be advised by the governor of Louisiana that the State has made the necessary preparations to defray the expenses thereof, he shall cause a personal examination to be made, under the direction of the surveyor general thereof, by experienced and faithful deputies, of all the swamp lands therein which are subject to overflow and unfit for cultivation, and a list of the same to be made out and certified by the deputies and the surveyor general to the secretary of the treasury, who shall approve the same, so far as they are not claimed and held by individuals; and on that approval, the fee simple to said lands shall vest in the State of Louisiana, subject to the disposal of the legislature thereof, provided, however, that the proceeds of said lands shall be applied exclusively, as far as necessary, to the construction of the levees and drains aforesaid.

On the 21st of March, 1850, the legislature of Louisiana passed an act to enable the governor to have the swamp and overflowed lands selected; and, in 1852, they passed an act, giving a preference in entering such lands to those in possession of or cultivating them, and the time of entering them was further extended by an act of 1853. The plaintiff in error entered this land on the 18th day of July, 1853, by virtue of a preference right claimed under that act of the legislature. He was permitted to make this entry at the State land office, in consequence of the secretary of the interior having, on the 14th of April, revoked his approval to the State, under the act of 1841, of this and other lands which had been located under warrants sold by the State, in conformity to the act of the legislature of 1844.

The reason assigned by the secretary of the interior was, that these locations had been made subsequent to the passage of the act of congress of 1849, granting to the State all the swamp and overflowed lands. He states, in his opinion, that he considered [ \*20 ] the words used in the first section of that act as \*importing a grant *in presenti*, and as confirming a right to the land, though other proceedings were necessary to perfect the title; and that when the title was perfected, it had relation back to the date of the grant. His approval to the State, of the location of the land in controversy, under the internal improvement law of 1841, was revoked, but the land was at the same time approved to the State, as having a vested title to it, under the act of 1849, and taking effect from the date of the passage of the act.

The controversy between the parties arises upon these two patents, both granted by the State of Louisiana—the one to Scudday,

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under the grant made by the act of congress of 1841, for the purposes of internal improvement; the other to Shaffer, under the grant made by the act of 1849, for the purpose of draining the swamp lands.

The case came regularly before the supreme court of the State; and that court, after stating that it was unnecessary to decide whether the construction placed upon the act of 1849, by the secretary of the interior, under which he revoked his approval of Scudday's location, was erroneous or not, proceeded to express their opinion as follows:

"It is certain (say the court) that the legislature could not have disposed of the land as belonging to the State, under the provisions of that act, [the act of 1849,] until she had complied with the conditions imposed on her by the act of congress, and until the approval of the secretary of the treasury; but if she had not chosen to avail herself of the right given to her to appropriate these lands as swamp lands by defraying the expenses of locating them, she had still the right of locating them under the internal improvement law of 1841, which was unconditional. The construction of the act of 1849, by the secretary of the interior, may be strictly correct; and yet it does not follow that the location of a warrant, under the internal improvement law of 1841, which had been approved by the proper department of the government, and for which a patent had been subsequently issued by the State, could be revoked, so as to destroy the title conferred by the patent. The question would have been different, if, after the passage by congress of the act of 1849, the United States had granted the land away from the State of Louisiana. Such was not the case; and as both the acts of 1841 and 1849 were grants of land to the State, we cannot go behind the patent which the State has granted. The patent can only be attacked on the ground of error or fraud. It is true that a patent issued against law is void; but in the present case the patent and all the proceedings on which it was based were in conformity to \* the laws. As between the [ \* 21 ] government of the United States and the State of Louisiana, a question will arise, whether the State is not entitled to an additional quantity of land, to be located under the act of congress of 1841, in consequence of the swamp lands having been appropriated for locations of warrants issued under the internal improvement act; but we are of opinion that the title which the State has granted to the plaintiff, and for which she has been paid, is unaffected by the acts of the officers of the United States government and of the State government, done since the patent was issued."

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The Barque Laura.

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Upon these grounds, the supreme court of the State gave judgment in favor of Scudday, and this writ of error is brought to revise that decision.

It does not appear from the opinion of the court, as above stated, that any question was decided that would give this court jurisdiction over its judgment. The land in dispute undoubtedly belonged to the State, under the grants made by congress, and both parties claim title under grants from the State. The construction placed by the secretary upon the act of 1849, and the revocation of his order approving the location of Scudday, did not and was not intended to revest the land in the United States. On the contrary, it affirmed the title of the State; and its only object was to secure to Louisiana the full benefit of both of the grants made by congress, and leaving it to the State to dispose of the lands to such persons and in such manner as it should by law direct. It certainly gave no right to the plaintiff in error. He admits the title of the State, and claims under a patent granted by the State. Now, whether this patent conveyed to him a title or not, depended altogether upon the laws of Louisiana, and not upon the acts of congress or the acts of any of the officers or authorities of the general government. It was a question, therefore, for the State courts. And the supreme court of the State have decided that this patent could convey no right to the land in question, because the State had parted from its title by a patent previously granted to Scudday, the defendant in error. The right claimed by the plaintiff in error, which was denied to him by the State court, did not therefore depend upon any act of congress, or the validity of any authority exercised under the United States, but exclusively upon the laws of Louisiana. And the supreme court of the State have decided that, according to these laws, he had no title; and that the land in question belonged to the grantee of the elder patent.

We have no authority to revise that judgment by writ of error; and this writ must therefore be dismissed for want of jurisdiction.

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THE BARQUE LAURA.

WILLIAM THOMAS and others v. JAMES W. OSBORN.

19 H. 22.

ADMIRALTY—LIENS FOR REPAIRS AND SUPPLIES IN A FOREIGN PORT.

1. By the laws of England, the master of a vessel is not authorized to create a lien on her for supplies and repairs obtained in a foreign port, except by a bottomry bond.

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Thomas v. Osborn.

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2. But such was not the ancient law of maritime nations; and the courts of the United States have adopted the general law of the seas on this subject.
3. But the master cannot create such a lien except for supplies and repairs, and unless there exists a necessity that the ship's credit should be pledged for them.
4. And it is also a part of the law on this subject, that the furnisher of supplies, or the lender of the money with which they are bought, should see to it that there is an apparent necessity, and that what is lent or furnished is for the use of the vessel. But see the *Grapeshot*, 9 Wallace, 129.
5. The numerous facts of long voyages at distant ports by a master controlling the vessel under "a lay" examined, and the conclusion arrived at that there was no necessity for a lien on the vessel for the supplies furnished, and that the party furnishing them had such dealings with the master in other matters that they must have known that he had the means, and that it was his duty to have paid for the repairs and supplies on which the libel is founded.

THIS is an appeal in admiralty from the circuit court for the district of Maryland.

The district court had decreed a lien on the barque *Laura* for repairs and supplies, and on appeal the circuit court had affirmed the judgment. The case is now here on appeal from the latter decree, and the facts are very fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Brune and Mr. Brown*, for appellants.

*Mr. Wallis and Mr. J. H. Thomas*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 25 ]

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the district of Maryland, sitting in admiralty. A libel was filed in the district court by the appellee, as assignee of Loring & Co., merchants in Valparaiso, asserting a lien on the barque *Laura*, of Plymouth, in the State of Massachusetts, for the cost of repairs and supplies furnished to that vessel at Valparaiso. The district court decreed for the lien, the circuit court affirmed that decree, and the claimants have brought the cause here by appeal.

It appears that in January, 1849, Phineas Leach, who had previously been in command of the barque, contracted with her owners to take her on what is termed "a lay." There does not appear to have been any written contract of affreight-

\* ment between them, nor are the terms of their agree- [ \* 26 ]  
ment fully described by any witness. But this mode of employing vessels is so common, and its terms and legal effect so well settled by long usage, it has been so often before the courts and the subject of adjudication, that no embarrassment is felt by us concerning the terms and conditions on which Leach took the vessel.

We understand from his testimony, as well as from known usage, ascertained and adjudicated on in the courts, that the master had



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the entire possession, command, and navigation of the vessel; that he was to employ her in such freighting voyages as he saw fit; that he was to victual and man the vessel at his own expense; that the owners were to keep the vessel in repair; that from the gross earnings were to be deducted all port charges, and the residue was to be divided into two equal parts, one of which was to belong to the owners, the other to the master; and that this agreement could be terminated by the restoration of the vessel to the owners by the master, or by their intervention to displace him, at the end of any voyage, but not while conducting any one which he had undertaken.

Having possession and command of the vessel under such a contract, Leach sailed from New Orleans in January, 1849, and after making a voyage to Rio de Janeiro, he sailed for and arrived at Valparaiso in November, 1849.

It is necessary to state with some particularity the voyages made after his arrival at Valparaiso. He sailed thence in December, 1849, with a cargo of Chili produce, on a freight amounting to about \$7,000, for San Francisco, where he arrived and delivered the cargo. He went thence to Talcahuana in ballast; and, having an intention to buy a cargo there on his own account, he wrote to Loring & Co., from San Francisco, to obtain from them a credit, on which to raise money to pay for the balance of the cost of this cargo, after appropriating towards it the freight money in his hands. Loring & Co. granted him a credit for \$3,000, to be reimbursed by Leach's draft on himself at San Francisco, at five per cent. premium. At Talcahuana, Leach drew on Loring & Co. for \$7,000, and bought doubloons; but, not being able to procure a cargo there, or at Maule, he sailed to Valparaiso, where he arrived in July, 1850. He handed over to Loring & Co. the doubloons and the proceeds of his freight money, which was in gold dust, and they supplied the vessel and purchased a cargo for Leach's account, charging a guaranty commission of five per cent. on their advances, and also a commission of two and a half per cent. on their [ \* 27 ] purchases. They rendered Leach \* an account, in which he is charged with the supplies of the barque and the cost of the cargo, and their commissions, and credited with the moneys received from him.

Leach carried this cargo to San Francisco; and, having sold it, made an arrangement with the mercantile house of Flint, Peabody & Co., established at San Francisco, that he would go to Valparaiso, and ship cargoes thence to them on their and his joint account, drawing on them for the cost. This arrangement was not

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limited to cargoes by the *Laura*, but was to extend to such other vessels as Leach might take up for the purpose.

From San Francisco, Leach sailed in the *Laura* to Talcahuana, where he saw one of the firm of Loring & Co., who gave him a credit for \$10,000 to buy a cargo there. He purchased part of a cargo; but, not being able to complete it, went to Valparaiso, where he arrived in May, 1851. He then informed Loring & Co. of his arrangement with Flint, Peabody & Co., and they agreed to advance him funds, to enable him to carry the arrangement into effect—to be reimbursed by remittances from San Francisco, with five per cent. commission, and one per cent. a month for interest. He accordingly left the vessel, putting Easton, his mate, in command; and Loring & Co. purchased the residue of the cargo for the *Laura*, charging its cost to the joint account of Leach, and Flint, Peabody & Co., and the *Laura* sailed in May, 1851, for San Francisco. She returned in ballast to Valparaiso in March, 1852; and at that time the principal bills for repairs and supplies, claimed in this case, were incurred. In March, 1852, the *Laura* again sailed under Easton's command, for San Francisco, *via* Peyta, where she touched to complete her cargo, and Easton there drew a bill on Loring & Co. to reimburse advances made to him in that port—partly to pay for cargo purchased there, and partly to pay for supplies and port charges.

The *Laura* returned to San Francisco in September, 1852, where she was taken possession of by Captain Weston, who had been sent there by the owners to bring her home. The owners gave no consent to the above-described proceedings of Leach in respect to the use and employment of the barque. From the time when Leach left the command of the *Laura*, in May, 1851, he remained in Valparaiso, and by means of funds furnished by Loring & Co., and with their assistance, he purchased and made six shipments of cargoes by vessels other than the *Laura*, under his arrangement with Flint, Peabody & Co., and Loring & Co. He had a desk in the counting-house of Loring & Co., and there transacted his business.

Setting aside all the special facts of this case, and viewing it \*only as an ordinary transaction, by which the [ \* 28 ] master of an American vessel procured repairs and supplies, and advances of money to pay for repairs and supplies, in a foreign port, the first question which arises is, whether he had power to hypothecate the vessel as a security for their payment, otherwise than by a bottomry bond, which must make the payment dependent on the arrival of the vessel, and creates no personal liability of the owners.

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We understand it to be definitely settled by the cases of *Stainbank v. Fleming*, 6 Eng. L. and Eq. 412, decided by the court of common pleas in 1851, and *Stainbank v. Shephard*, 20 Eng. L. and Eq. 547, on writ of error in the exchequer chamber, so late as 1853, that by the law of England the master of a ship has not power to create a lien on the vessel as security for the payment for repairs and supplies obtained in a foreign port, save by a bottomry bond; that he can only pledge his own credit and that of his owners, but cannot, by any act of his, give the creditor security on the vessel; while, at the same time, the personal liability of the owners continues. Neither of those learned courts considered—perhaps there was no occasion for them to consider—(*Pope v. Nickerson*, 3 Story's R. 465) what should be the effect, in an English tribunal, of the law of the place where the repairs and supplies were obtained, if that law tacitly created a lien on the vessel. See Story's *Con. of Laws*, § 322 b, 401-'3. These decisions rest merely upon the want of authority in the master, according to the law of England, to create, by his own act, an absolute hypothecation of the vessel as security for a loan. But the maritime law of the United States is settled otherwise—in harmony with the ancient and general maritime law of the commercial world. The master of a vessel of the United States, being in a foreign port, has power, in a case of necessity, to hypothecate the vessel, and also to bind himself and the owners, personally, for repairs and supplies; and he does so without any express hypothecation, when, in a case of necessity, he obtains them on the credit of the vessel without a bottomry bond. *The Ship General Smith*, 4 Wheat. 488; *Peyroux v. Howard*, 7 Peters, 324, 341; *The Virgin*, 8 Peters, 538; *The Nestor*, 1 Story, 73; *The Chusan*, 2 Story, 455; *The Phœbe*, Ware's R. 263; *Davis v. Child*, Daveis's R. 12, 71; *The William and Emeline*, 1 Blatch. and How. 66; *Davis v. A New Brig*, Gilpin's R. 487; *Sarchet v. The Davis*, Crabbe's R. 185.

It is not material whether the hypothecation is made directly to the furnishers of repairs and supplies, or to one who lends money on the credit of the vessel, in a case of necessity, to pay such furnishers. "Through all time," says Valin, "by the [ \* 29 ] \* use and custom of the seas, it has been allowable for the master to borrow money, on bottomry or otherwise, upon the hull and keel of the vessel, for repairs, provisions, and other necessities, to enable him to continue the voyage;" Com. on Art. 19, Ord. of 1681; and this assertion rests upon sufficient authority. The Roman law, *de exercitoria actione*, D. 14, 1, authorized a simple loan, and does not confine the master to borrow on bottomry.

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The Consulat del Mare, ch. 104, 105, 236, the laws of Wisby, art. 13, the laws of Oleron, art. 1, Le Guidon, ch. v, art. 33, the French ordinance of 1681, art. 19, as well as the present French code de commerce, art. 235, concur in allowing the master to contract a simple loan, in a case of necessity, binding on the vessel. A difference of opinion exists between Valin and Emerigon, concerning the power of the master also to bind the owner to accept bills of exchange for the sum borrowed; but they concur in opinion that the master has power to contract a loan to pay for repairs and supplies, and to give what we term a lien on the ship as security, in a case of necessity. See Valin's Com. art. 19; Emerigon's Con. à la Grope, ch. 4, sec. 11; vol. 2, pp. 484, &c. In another place, ch. 12. sec. 4, Emerigon observes, "It matters little whether one has lent money or furnished materials." The older as well as the more recent commentators are of the same opinion. Kuricke, 765; Loccenius, lib. 3, ch. 7, n. 6; Stypmannus, 417, n. 107; Boulay Paty Cours de Droit, Com. tit. 1, sec. 2, vol. 1, p. 39, and tit. 4, sec. 14, vol. 1, pp. 151-'3: Pardessus Droit Com. vol. 3, n. 631, 644, 660; Pardessus Col. vol. 2, p. 225, note. The subject has been elaborately examined by Judge Ware, in Davis v. Child, Daveis's R. 75, and we are satisfied he arrived at the correct result.

Nor do we think the fact that the master was charterer and owner *pro hac vice* necessarily deprived him of this power. It is true it does not exist in a place where the owner is present. (The St. Jago de Cuba, 9 Wheat. 409.) But this doctrine cannot be safely extended to the case of an owner *pro hac vice* in command of the vessel. Practically this special ownership leaves the enterprise subject to the same necessities as if the master were master merely, and not charterer, and the maritime law gives him the same power to borrow to meet that necessity, as if he were not charterer. The Consulat de la Mer, ch. 289, (2 Par. Col. 337,) has provided for the very case, for it makes the interest of the general owner responsible for the contracts of the master who has received the vessel "*en commande*;" and one species of this contract was what we should term "a lay"—that is, a participation in profits. *Vide* \* 2 Par. Col. 186, note 3; 52, note 1; 49, note 4; and the [ \* 30 ] chapters there referred to.

It is true the master cannot bind the general owners personally for supplies which he, as charterer, was to furnish. (Webb v. Pierce, 1 Curtis, 110.) Neither could he bind them beyond the value of their shares in the vessel, under the ancient maritime law. (Consulat, ch. 34, 239, and Pardessus's note, vol. 2, p. 225.) Emerigon is of opinion that the effect of the French ordinance is the

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same. (Con. à la Grope, ch. 4, sec. 11.) In our law, if the master is the agent of the owners, his contracts are obligatory on them personally. When he acts on his own account, he does not create any obligation on them. But it does not follow that he may not bind the vessel. In *Hickox v. Buckingham*, 18 How., it was held that contracts of affreightment entered into by the master, within the scope of his apparent authority as master, bind the vessel to the merchandise for the performance of such contracts, wholly irrespective of the ownership of the vessel; and whether the master be the agent of the general or special owner—and this upon the principle that the general owner must be presumed to consent, when he lets the vessel, that the master may make such contracts, which operate as a tacit hypothecation of the vessel. And so in this case, we think, the general owners must be taken to have consented that, if a case of necessity should arise in the course of any voyages which the master was carrying on for the joint benefit of themselves and himself, he might obtain, on the credit of the vessel, such supplies and repairs as should be needful to enable him to continue the joint adventure. This presumption of consent by the general owner is entertained by the law from the actual circumstances of the case, and from considerations of the convenience and necessities of the commercial world.

But the limitation of the authority of the master to cases of necessity, not only of repairs and supplies, but of credit to obtain them, and the requirement that the lender or furnisher should see to it, that apparently such a case of necessity exists, are as ancient and well established as the authority itself.

In some of the old sea laws, they are declared in express terms, as they were in the Roman law: *Aliquam diligentiam in ea re creditorem debere præstare*, D. 14, 1, 7; *navis in ea causa fuisset ut refici deberet*, D. 14, 1, 7. And in the *Consulat del Mare*, ch. 107, "But the merchant should assure himself that what he lends is destined for the use of the ship, and that it is necessary for that object."

A reference to the other codes cited above will show that a case of necessity was uniformly required; and the commentators all agree, that if one lend money to a master, knowing he has not need to borrow, he does not act in good faith, and the loan does not oblige the owner. Valin, art. 19; Emerigon, Con. à la Grope, ch. 4, sec. 8; and the older commentators cited by him. Boulay Paty Cours de Droit Com. tit. I, sec. 2, tit. IV, sec. 14; and see the authorities cited by him in note 1, p. 153.

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To constitute a case of apparent necessity, not only must the repairs and supplies be needful, but it must be apparently necessary for the master to have a credit, to procure them. If the master has funds of his own, which he ought to apply to purchase the supplies which he is bound by the contract of hiring to furnish himself, and if he has funds of the owners, which he ought to apply to pay for the repairs, then no case of actual necessity to have a credit exists. And if the lender knows these facts, or has the means, by the use of due diligence, to ascertain them, then no case of apparent necessity exists to have a credit; and the act of the master in procuring a credit does not bind the interest of the general owners in the vessel.

We now come to the application of these principles to the case at bar.

The freight money earned by the *Laura* was applicable, and ought to have been applied, by the master, to the necessities of the vessel; the one half, (after deducting port charges,) which belonged to himself, should have been applied to pay the wages of the crew, and obtain supplies for the vessel; the other half, which belonged to the owners, to paying for necessary repairs.

The amount of this freight money actually earned and received was about \$12,000. Besides this, the *Laura* had made two voyages to San Francisco, with cargoes belonging to Leach and to him, and Flint, Peabody & Co., before the bills now in question were incurred. We hesitate to declare that a master, who takes a vessel on "a lay," can use it to carry cargoes of his own. The practical difference to the owners is, that there can be no agreed rates of freight, and no such security on the cargo for its payment, as the marine law ordinarily provides, and as the owners may be reasonably considered to contemplate when they let the vessel. (*Gracie v. Palmer*, 8 Wheat. 605.) But this point has not been adjudicated on by the courts, nor does this case furnish any evidence of what the usage is in this particular. Waiving a decision of this question, it is, at all events, clear the vessel earns for the owners a reasonable freight by carrying cargo of the master; and, according to the evidence in this case, that reasonable freight must have been \*set down for each of the two voyages on [ \* 32 ] which the cargo of the master was carried, at the sum of \$7,000, that being the sum earned on the preceding voyage between the same ports, and there being no evidence before us of a change in the price of freights in the intermediate periods; so that when these expenses, now in question, were incurred, the master had received in money, as freight, \$12,000, and must be taken to have



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received, in the enhanced value of his own merchandise, through its carriage to San Francisco, \$14,000 more. The amount previously expended by him for repairs and supplies, at Valparaiso, does not appear to have exceeded \$3,000. The amount expended at San Francisco does not appear, but there is no reason to suppose it was considerable.

In July, 1850, Loring & Co. received from Leach his funds, supplied him with credit, and purchased a cargo for him. In May, 1851, they made themselves parties to an arrangement, under which Leach was to quit the command of the vessel, and become a merchant, resident at Valparaiso. Whether they did or did not know Leach had the vessel on a lay, this was obviously wrong as respected the owners; for though, under a lay, the master is owner *pro hac vice*, yet there is a personal confidence reposed in him as master, which he cannot delegate to another, except in case of necessity. Before the credit now in question was given by Loring & Co., they not only had notice that Leach had wrongfully deserted the command of the vessel, and had diverted the freight which the vessel had earned and ought to have earned into his business as a merchant, but they had actually assisted him to do so, by receiving freight money, and mingling it with other funds in their hands, out of which and their own funds they made advances to enable him to pay for cargoes; and they acted as his agents in their purchase; and they had, moreover, profited largely by so doing, charging high rates of interest, as well as commissions.

It should be added, that the owners have received nothing for their part of the earnings of their vessel, during all these voyages; for though, since his return to this country, Leach has rendered his accounts to the owners, they refused to settle them, as rendered, and Leach testifies he has not the means to pay any balance due to them.

In such a state of facts, we are of opinion Loring & Co. had no right to lend Leach money, or furnish him with supplies on the credit of the ship, and cannot be taken to have done so.

Our opinion is, that inasmuch as the freight money earned by the vessel was sufficient to pay for all the needful repairs and supplies, and might have been commanded for that use if they had not been wrongfully diverted, no case of actual  
[ \* 33 ] \* necessity to encumber the vessel existed; and as Loring & Co. not only knew this, but aided Leach to divert the freight money to other objects, they obtained no lien on the vessel for their advances.

The cause must be remanded, with directions to dismiss the libel with costs.

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Mr. Chief Justice TANEY, Mr. Justice McLEAN, and Mr. Justice WAYNE, dissented, and Mr. Justice McLEAN and Mr. Justice WAYNE concurred with the chief justice in the following dissenting opinion:

Mr. Chief Justice TANEY dissenting.

I dissent from the judgment of the court in this case, and adhere to the opinion I gave at the circuit.

The principal question is, whether certain repairs and supplies furnished to the barque Laura, of Plymouth, in the State of Massachusetts, while she was in the port of Valparaiso, in Chili, in February and March, 1852, are a lien upon the vessel.

The appellants are citizens of Massachusetts, and, at the time of making and furnishing these repairs and supplies, and until and after this libel was filed, were the owners of the barque. She was built for them at Newburyport, under the superintendence of a certain Phineas Leach, who was by profession a mariner. After the vessel was completed, she was placed under his command, as master; and, in the year 1847, he and the appellants agreed that he should sail the vessel on what, in the New England ship-owning States, is familiarly called "*a lay*,"—that is to say, he was to victual and man her, pay one-half the port charges, and be entitled to one-half of the freights or earnings. This is the contract, as stated by Leach in his testimony. No written contract is produced. Indeed, contracts of this description, it would seem, are so well known and understood in the States above mentioned, that they are often made orally, and not in writing. And when the owners agree with a mariner that he shall sail the vessel on a "*a lay*," both parties understand that the mariner is to take the command of her as master, to victual and man her, and pay half the port charges; the owner to keep the vessel in repair, and the freight and earnings to be equally divided between them. Upon a contract of this kind, the vessel, during its continuance, is under the exclusive control of the master, as respects her voyages and employment. He alone has the right to determine what voyages he will undertake—what cargo he will carry—upon what terms—and to \* what ports he will sail in search of freight. His share [ \* 34 ] of the earnings of the vessel are his wages, and he receives no other compensation for his services as master.

Before I proceed to state the facts out of which this controversy has arisen, it is proper to say that Leach states in his testimony that, in addition to the contract above mentioned, it was agreed, between the appellants and himself, that he should have the right

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to become a part owner of the vessel, to the amount of one-eighth, whenever he paid for it. But he never paid anything on this account, and never, therefore, had any interest as part owner; and, upon his return to Plymouth, in 1852, as hereinafter mentioned, when his connection with the Laura ceased, this contract was canceled. It was a written contract; but whether it was a part of his contract to sail the vessel upon "a lay," is not stated in the testimony.

As Leach never became part owner, his authority over the vessel was derived altogether from his contract to sail her upon the terms above mentioned. That contract, as stated by him, was indefinite as to its duration. No particular time was fixed for its termination, nor the happening of any particular event. And it was during the continuance of this contract that the voyages were made, and the acts done which have given rise to this controversy.

The material facts in the case are derived mainly from the testimony of Leach, who was produced as a witness by the owners, who are the appellants; and it requires a close and careful scrutiny to understand the bearing of different portions of his testimony upon the different points raised in the argument. The examination itself, under the commission to take testimony, which was executed at Boston, is singularly involved and confused; and the answers, I regret to say, often showing a disposition to prevaricate, and a desire to make the best case the witness could for the owners, and against the libellants.

His testimony begins by describing several voyages which he made in the year 1849, which are not material to the matter in issue, until he comes to the one from Rio to Valparaiso. This was his first voyage to the Pacific, and he arrived at Valparaiso in November, 1849, with a cargo consigned to Loring & Co., the libellants. This company was composed of citizens of Massachusetts, domiciled at Valparaiso for the purposes of commerce. In December, 1849, he sailed from Valparaiso to San Francisco, with a cargo on freight; the freight amounting to about seven thousand dollars. Being unable to procure a cargo on freight at [ \* 35 ] San Francisco, he sailed for \* Talcahuana in ballast, and, no freight offering at that place, he sailed for Maule in ballast, but was prevented from entering the port by bad weather and a bad bar, and proceeded to Valparaiso. He arrived there early in July, 1850. While there, he obtained advances from Loring & Co., which enabled him to purchase a cargo for the Laura on his own account, with which he sailed for San Francisco, where he arrived in November, 1850.

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While he was in San Francisco, he made an arrangement with Flint, Peabody & Co., of that place, by which, upon his return to Chili, he was to purchase cargoes on joint account, and ship or consign them to that house at San Francisco. He was to purchase cargoes by means of bills drawn on them, and they were to honor his drafts. There was no limit as to the time; but this agreement was conditional, and was to depend upon the ability of Leach to make arrangements in Chili, by which he could raise money on those drafts to purchase the cargoes; and if he succeeded in making those arrangements, he was to remain in Chili to make the purchases. The arrangement was not confined to cargoes by the *Laura*, but he was to buy and ship according to his judgment.

When he left San Francisco, he again proceeded to Talcahuana in ballast, where he arrived in February, 1851. He met there Mr. Bowen, one of the firm of Loring & Co., and told him that he wanted another cargo, but had not money to buy it, and Bowen thereupon gave him a letter of credit upon his house at Valparaiso, by which he was authorized to draw on them for ten thousand dollars, payable eight days after sight. Being unable to complete his cargo at Talcahuana, he proceeded to Valparaiso, where he arrived in the month of April or May following, and obtained the balance of his cargo by the aid of further advances from Loring & Co. He then mentioned to them his arrangement with Flint, Peabody & Co., and asked if Loring & Co. would give him facilities in the way of funds to carry out this arrangement. They agreed to advance the funds, upon an interest account with him, charging five per cent. for advances, and one per cent. a month for interest, and they were to be paid by remittances from San Francisco without drawing bills. Leach acceded to this arrangement, and directed them to charge the cargo then on board the *Laura* at Valparaiso to the joint account of Flint, Peabody & Co., and himself, Leach. He then, as he says, "put the mate, Reuben S. Easton, in as master," and sent him to San Francisco, Leach remaining at Valparaiso. This was in May, 1851, and he remained there until March, 1852, carrying on and superintending those transactions.

\* During this period, he engaged extensively in mer- [ \* 36 ] cantile business, shipping cargoes by other vessels, as well as the one by the *Laura*, and obtaining the means of purchasing them by the arrangements he had made with Loring & Co., as hereinbefore stated; and he had a desk in their counting-house, at which he transacted his business.

The *Laura* did not return again to Valparaiso until February,

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1852. It was then found that she needed repairs and supplies to a large amount to fit her for another voyage; and Leach also wanted funds to purchase another cargo for her. He had at that time, it seems, determined to return to Plymouth; but before he did so, he wished to dispatch the Laura, under the command of Easton, on a voyage to Peyta and Panama, with a cargo purchased on his own account. He had no funds for either purpose. He states that he had but \$500, and this, it appears, he needed for his personal expenses; and the repairs were made and the supplies furnished for the vessel by Loring & Co., at his request, to the amount of \$2,707.69. Leach states that they were necessary, and made and furnished with economy; that he was himself on board, superintending and directing them; that Easton was also on board assisting him, but had nothing to do with ordering or directing them. He merely executed Leach's orders. The cargo was likewise purchased and paid for by Loring & Co. for Leach, and at his request.

The repairs were made and the supplies furnished in the latter part of February and early part of March, 1852, and the cargo put on board immediately afterwards. The invoice is dated Valparaiso, March 18th, and is headed, "Invoice of sundries purchased and shipped by Loring & Co., on board the barque Laura, for Peyta and Panama, on account and risk of Capt. Phineas Leach, consigned to his order, *for sales and returns to Loring & Co.*"—the aggregate amount being \$5,779.81. The vessel sailed, as soon as the cargo was on board, under the command of Easton. And on the 20th of March, two accounts were stated by Loring & Co.; one for the repairs and supplies to the Laura, and the other their private or personal account against Leach; both of which were signed by Leach on that day, with a written admission that they were correct.

The first mentioned of these accounts is headed, "Barque Laura and owners to Loring & Co., Dr.," and states the particular items of repairs and supplies, amounting, as before mentioned, in the aggregate, to \$2,707.69. This account is the matter now in dispute. The other is headed, "Dr., Capt. P. Leach in account with

Loring & Co. to 20th of March, 1852," showing a balance [ \* 37 ] due from Leach of \$8,527.69. Among other \* items, he is charged, in this account, with the amount of the account for repairs and supplies, and this item is charged thus—"our ac. with barque Laura"—and he is also charged with the amount of the invoice above mentioned thus—"our invoice sundries for Laura due April 12, 1852"—showing that the charge for the

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repairs and supplies was always kept separate and distinct from Leach's personal account.

On the day these two separate accounts were adjusted and signed by the parties, or in a day or two afterwards, Leach left Valparaiso for Panama, and from thence proceeded home. He states that he arrived at Boston on the 20th of April following, and it appears, by the document in evidence, that, on the 9th of July next after his return, the appellants agreed with Francis H. Weston that he should proceed to Panama, or wherever the vessel was lying, and assume the command of her as master; and, after fulfilling any engagement she might be under, should proceed with her for a load of guano on freight, or any other freight that could be obtained, to an Atlantic port. Weston proceeded accordingly, and arrived at Valparaiso in September. The *Laura* arrived there about a fortnight afterwards, when he assumed the command, and Easton left her.

In the execution of his orders from the owners, Weston proceeded on the voyage directed by them, and then brought the vessel and cargo to Baltimore, where he arrived in June, 1853; and immediately after his arrival she was arrested upon the libel now under consideration.

This narrative of the facts in the case is necessary in order to understand how the questions discussed at the bar have arisen. There are other circumstances in evidence, relating to different points, which it will be material to advert to more particularly hereafter.

As I have already said, the principal matter in dispute is, whether the repairs and supplies furnished to the barque in the port of Valparaiso, as hereinbefore mentioned, in February and March, 1852, were a lien upon the vessel at the time this libel was filed.

In deciding this question, the first point to be considered is, in what relation did Leach stand to the vessel, while he was sailing her under this contract? Was he the owner for the time? And in determining the legal effect and operation of contracts made by him, are they to be regarded as the contracts of the owner, or the contracts of the master?

This is a question of the highest importance to the commercial interests of this country. It is well known that almost the whole of our immense coasting trade is carried on by vessels owned in the northeastern States of the Union; and the far \* greater part of them are sailing under contracts like [ \*38 ] this. And upon our coast, stormy and dangerous as it is at certain seasons of the year, very serious damage is often sustained by these vessels, and heavy amounts frequently required



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and obtained in the ports of other States for repairs and supplies to enable them to proceed on their voyages.

Now, if Leach is to be regarded as owner for the time when he was sailing the Laura under the agreement, then by the maritime law the repairs and supplies furnished at his request are presumed to have been furnished upon his personal credit, unless the contrary appears; and in that view of the subject, Loring & Co. have not, and never had, any lien upon the vessel; and the libel against her cannot be maintained. But if, on the contrary, Leach is to be regarded as master, and as making the contract by virtue of his authority over the barque in that character, then these repairs and supplies in a foreign port, if necessary to enable the vessel to proceed, are presumed to have been made on the credit of the vessel, unless the contrary appears, as well as on the credit of the owners and Leach; and in this aspect of the case, Loring & Co. had a lien upon her, which they may enforce in this proceeding unless it has been waived or discharged.

These are the established principles of maritime law in this country, as heretofore recognized and administered in the courts of the United States. And I do not deem it necessary to refer to English cases, or to the decrees or doctrines in the different nations on the continent of Europe, which have been cited in the argument, because I consider the rule, as I have stated it, to be conclusively settled in this country by an unbroken series of decisions in this court and at the circuits. The case of *The General Smith*, (4 Wheat. 443;) *The St. Jago de Cuba*, (9 Wheat. 416;) and the case of *Ramsey v. Allegre*, (12 Wheat. 611,) explained and commented on in the case of *Andrews v. Wall* and others, (3 How. 573,) may be regarded as the leading cases on this subject.

The case before us is one of the more interest, because it is the first in which the construction and legal effect of these contracts for sailing on a "*lay*" has come up for decision in this court. They are, as I have said, peculiar to a particular portion of the Union, and are scarcely ever to be found in the maritime contracts of any other part of the commercial world. They are also comparatively modern in their use. And if it is held, that a person furnishing necessary repairs and supplies in a foreign port, to a vessel sailing under a contract of this kind, has not a remedy against the

owner, and also a lien on the vessel for such provisions [ \* 39 ] and supplies, as well as for repairs \* to the vessel—although they are both furnished at the request of a master who is without funds, and has no other means of obtaining them—then this class of cases will form an exception to the general mari-

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time code of the United States, to which vessels belonging to the ports of other States, and sailing under the usual contract with the master, for certain wages, are subjected; and the parties making the repairs or furnishing the supplies will be deprived of the securities to which they have heretofore supposed themselves entitled, and upon which they have mainly relied; for the personal responsibility of the master, after he is suffered to leave the port, is most commonly of very little value. And it would exempt the ship-owners, in one portion of the United States, from the liabilities and burdens imposed upon those of other States, merely upon the ground that in the one the owner compensates his captain by allowing him a share of the net amount of the freight earned by the vessel, and in the other by fixed and certain wages. For this, in truth, is the only difference between vessels sailing under a "lay" and those sailing under the usual and customary contract between the owner and master.

In making the inquiry whether Leach was owner while sailing under this contract, we shall find few if any cases in the English decisions to assist us. For contracts of this kind, as I have already said, are hardly if ever used there. And I can find no case where the question arose as to who was owner for voyage in which the contract is not clearly distinguishable from the one before us. And in all of the cases in which it has been held that the general owners were not responsible, it will be found that, by the terms of the contract, the entire and exclusive possession and control of the vessel was transferred for a certain time, or a particular voyage or voyages, and where the general owner, during the time stipulated, had no right to exercise any act of ownership over her. In other words, they are cases in which the court held, that the vessel was let or demised to the party for the time, so as to vest the right of property in the charterer, leaving in the general owners a reversionary interest, subject to the particular interest so let or demised. And whether this is the case or not, and whether there is a special and exclusive property in the charterer, does not depend upon any particular form of words or any particular facts. The general rule in relation to the construction of such contracts is laid down in *Abb. on Ship.* 61, (7th Am. Ed'n,) in the following words, as the result of the various decisions to which he refers: "From these cases (he says) it appears that the question whether or not the possession of a vessel passes out of the owner or charterer depends upon no single fact or \* expression, but upon the [ \* 40 ] whole of the language of the contract, as applicable to its attendant circumstances.

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But although we find no case in the English reports that can be regarded as in point, contracts like the one before us, and indeed in the same words, have, on several occasions, been brought before the circuit court of the United States in the first circuit, where they have been carefully and deliberately considered by the learned judge who recently presided in that circuit. And it has been uniformly held in that court, by Mr. Justice Story, that the master sailing a vessel under such a contract as this is not the exclusive owner for the voyage; and, if regarded as owner at all, is a qualified and limited one; and his character and authority, and duty as master, is not merged in it; and that his contracts for repairs and supplies in a foreign port are made in that character, and are a lien upon the vessel.

One of these contracts came before him in the case of the *Nestor*, reported in 1 Sum. 73, and was decided in 1831. The claim was for a cable furnished to the vessel at Alexandria, in the District of Columbia, at the request of the master. The vessel belonged to Portland, in the State of Maine. And the court held that the vessel was liable, unless it was shown that the credit was exclusively given to the master. It is true that the article furnished in that case was for the use of the brig, which the owner was bound to keep in repair. But the principle decided applies directly to the case before us—that is, that the master, under one of these contracts, is not owner for the voyage, so far as to exclude his character and authority as captain. And that his contracts for repairs and supplies are presumed to be made in the latter character, and to create the usual maritime lien upon the vessel, and the usual liability of the owner, unless the presumption is repelled by proof that the credit was given to him. The whole subject is fully discussed in this case, and such will be found upon a careful examination the result of the opinion.

The case of the *Cassius*, 2 Story's Rep. 81, was a contract of the same description, between the master and owners; and in that case the rights of the master and the responsibility of the owners for his acts in a foreign port were fully considered; and the decision turned upon the question whether, under one of these contracts, the master was the owner for the time. And the learned judge, speaking of the case of *Taggart v. Loring*, 16 Mass. R. 336, says: "That case is distinguishable in its actual circumstances from the present. The argument in that case does not appear from the statements of the report to have been identical with the present.

And if it were, I must say that I should have some difficulty in acceding to the authority of that case, if it meant

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to establish that the master had an exclusive special ownership in the ship for the voyage. I should rather incline to the opinion, that if he had any ownership at all for the voyage, it was in common with the general owners." The contract in that case, upon which the libel was filed, was executed by him as master, and the court held that it bound the vessel.

Indeed, I do not see how, upon any fair interpretation of the terms of these contracts, a different construction could be given to them. There are no words in them which import that it is the intention of the owners to transfer the exclusive right of property in the vessel to the master for the time, nor anything in the character of the contract from which it can be implied—on the contrary, the right of possession remains necessarily in the owners. For they are to keep the ship in repair, and the master is only to man and victual her. The owners have therefore the right while the contract continues, to take exclusive possession of her, from time to time, for the purpose of putting her in proper repair, and to have her properly equipped, so that she may always be seaworthy, and their property not be imprudently exposed to danger. And whatever Leach did, or was authorized to do, in this respect, was necessarily done as master, holding the possession for the time the repairs were making, not as owner of the vessel, but as agent for the owners, by virtue of his authority as master. And the owners, in a case like this, may, as in the case of an ordinary captain upon certain wages, displace him from the command whenever they think proper—being bound, however, in like manner, to fulfill the engagements into which he had lawfully entered.

Moreover, he had no connection with the vessel, except under his contract to sail her in the character of captain or master. He had no authority over her, nor any right of possession, nor any power to direct her voyages or movements, except in this character. All of his rights were inseparably connected with his official relation to the vessel, and depended upon it. The inducement to the contract was the confidence which the owners reposed in his seamanship, integrity, and capacity for business. It was a personal trust, which he could not delegate or assign to another. It was to be executed by himself; and the moment he ceased to be master, all right of possession, and all right to control her voyages and movements, ceased also. And if his right to the possession of the barque, and to man and victual her, and contract for freights, and to receive half her earnings, were inseparably connected with his official relation to the vessel as master, and dependent upon it, I cannot understand \*how his contract for [ \* 42 ]

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repairs and supplies can be said to be made in any other character.

His relation to the vessel, and his rights in and over her, differ in no material respect, in a contract of this kind, from that of a master sailing in the ordinary mode, upon fixed and certain wages, from one port to another, under the direction of the owner, to carry or seek for freight. The only difference is, that a larger discretion as to the voyages to be undertaken is given to the master, and he receives half the earnings, instead of certain and fixed wages. And I cannot perceive how these two circumstances can give him any ownership of the vessel, or why the master's contracts for repairs and supplies in a foreign port shall be a lien upon the vessel in one case, and not in the other. The fact that he is to victual and man the vessel cannot of itself give a right of property in her. It is, undoubtedly, a circumstance to be considered in expounding these contracts, but nothing more. For the exclusive right for the voyage may as well and legally be transferred where the owners man and victual her, as where it is done by the charterer, provided the contract taken altogether shows that such was the intention of the parties. It does not, as I have already shown, depend upon any particular fact, but upon the entire agreement. And I can see nothing in agreements of this kind, as was said by Mr. Justice Story in the case of the *Cassius*, which indicates an intention to make the master the exclusive owner during the voyages he might make, or that would justify the court in giving it such a construction.

I am aware, that in some or all of the States where these contracts are usually made, there are cases in the State courts in which it has been held that in these contracts the master is the owner, and that his contracts made in the port of another State are made in the character of owner and not of master, and that an action cannot be maintained upon them against the general owners.

I shall not stop to examine these cases, because the question here is not whether an action can be maintained against the owners for these repairs and supplies, but whether they were a lien upon the barque. I admit that I can perceive no distinction in principle between the personal liability of the general owners and the liability of the vessel. For whatever may be the rights and liabilities of the master and owners, as between themselves, upon their private contract, they cannot affect the rights of third parties dealing with him in his character of master, and furnishing necessary repairs and supplies in a foreign port at his request. They know him only as master, and deal with him in that character. And

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it is the rule of the \* maritime law, as settled in my [ \* 43 ] judgment by the decisions in the courts of this country, that in a case of that kind the owners personally, as well as the vessel, are liable for the amount. But if the owner is present, and they are furnished to him, it is equally well established, that the credit is presumed to have been given to him personally, and no lien on the vessel is implied. The decisions in the State courts cannot therefore, it would seem, be reconciled to the decisions of the circuit court of the United States, hereinbefore referred to.

But however this may be, the implied lien on the vessel in cases like the one before us has been maintained in the circuit court. And as the question of maritime lien, with which we are now dealing, belongs peculiarly to the admiralty courts, and the paramount jurisdiction in such cases is vested in them by the constitution of the United States, it necessarily follows, that it must rest with them to interpret the contract, and to determine whether it created a lien or not, and how, and when, and against whom, it can be enforced.

In the case of the *Barque Chusan*, 2 Story's Rep. 462, he says: "The constitution of the United States has declared that the judicial power of the national government shall extend to all cases of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction; and it is not competent for the States, by local legislation, to enlarge or limit or narrow it. In the exercise of this admiralty and maritime jurisdiction, the courts of the United States are exclusively governed by the legislation of congress, and in the absence thereof by the general principles of maritime law. The States have no right to prescribe the rules by which the courts of the United States shall act, nor the jurisprudence which they shall administer."

The opinions of the State tribunals to which I have referred are certainly entitled to very high respect, upon any question of law that may come before them; yet the question before us is not one of State law. It is a contract for maritime service, and belongs to the admiralty courts of the United States. And the State decisions, therefore, however highly we respect them, carry with them no binding judicial authority, when in conflict with the decisions of the courts of the United States upon questions belonging to the federal courts. And I the more firmly adhere to the doctrines of the circuit court, hereinbefore stated, because, as I have already said, I can see nothing in the terms of the contract, or in its character and objects, that would justify a different construction. In my opinion, therefore, Leach had no ownership in the *Laura*, and in the contract in question exercised the powers of master, and nothing more.



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Such being, in my judgment, the meaning and legal [ \* 44 ] effect \* of the contract between the owners and Leach, the next question to be considered is, was he still master when these repairs and supplies were furnished?

The appellants contend, that if he was not owner, but only master, while he was sailing the barque, he yet ceased to be master when he remained at Valparaiso, and placed the vessel under the command of Easton, and that from that time Easton was the master; and the contract of Leach for repairs and supplies would therefore create no lien. Undoubtedly, the conduct of Leach in this respect was a violation of his duty to the owners, if he acted without their consent. He was to sail the vessel himself, and this personal trust and confidence could not be transferred by him to another. Such a transfer would be a breach of his contract, and of his duty under it. But that is a question between him and his owners, and they might displace him or not, as they saw proper. The point here is, did his official relation as master cease when he engaged in commercial pursuits, and remained on shore at Valparaiso?

Certainly, the misconduct of a captain, while on a voyage or in a foreign port, does not, *ipso facto*, deprive him of his office. It would be a sufficient reason for the owners to dismiss him; but in this case it is not pretended that he was dismissed or suspended by them. No other person was appointed to the command until after he had voluntarily surrendered it to the owners, after his return to Massachusetts in the spring of 1852. And these supplies had been furnished, at his request, months before the new master was appointed.

Nor did he abandon his official relation to the vessel while he remained at Valparaiso; but, on the contrary, continued to hold possession in person or by his agent, and to exercise the rights and authority of master, according to the terms of his contract with the owners. He continued to man and victual her, direct her voyages, and receive the freights. Easton was paid by him, and not by the owners; he acted under the direction of Leach, as his agent and subordinate, and not under the direction of the owners. He was not even allowed to receive the freight; and when the supplies in question were furnished, Leach was actually on board, in actual command, and Easton acting as his subordinate, under his orders. And as Leach had no ownership whatever in the vessel, all of this must have been done by him as master, and could have been done in no other character; for if he had abandoned that official position, and Easton was master, he had no authority over Easton,

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nor any more right to interfere with him on the vessel than any other stranger.

Nor is his absence from the vessel by any means \*in- [ \* 45 ] compatible with this official relation and authority. It is not necessary for the existence of such a relation, and the exercise of such an authority, that he should always be on her deck. He may be absent for a longer or shorter time, and at a greater or lesser distance, without forfeiting his authority; and when once appointed master by the owners, he continues master until displaced by them, or he himself surrenders the office. As respects a dismissal by the owners, Mr. Justice Story says, in the case of the *Tribune*, 3 Sum. Rep. 149, "Being once master, he must be deemed still to continue to hold that character until some overt act or declaration of the owners displaced him from the station." And certainly there was no such act or declaration while Leach continued in the counting-house of Loring & Co. And as to Leach himself, it is obvious, from the facts above stated, that he had not resigned or surrendered the command.

It is stated that Easton was master. By what authority was he master? He was not agent of the owners; he was not appointed by them, nor authorized by them to exercise any control over the ship. Nor would they have been bound by his contracts if he had made any, nor responsible for his acts. There were none of the relations and trusts which exist between owners and master, for they had not confided the ship to him, and were not even responsible for his wages; and if Leach was not master, and authorized to bind the vessel and owners by his contract, the vessel was sailing without one, and without any lawful authority from those to whom she belonged. It is true, Leach says he appointed him master; but that does not clothe him with the authority which the maritime law annexes to that character, unless Leach had lawful power to appoint him. He might, no doubt, have properly sent him on the voyage, and placed the vessel under his command while he remained on shore, if the interest of the owners required or would justify it. And he might, if he pleased, call him master or captain; but by whatever name he chose to call him, he would be nothing more than his subordinate and agent. He would not, in respect to the owners or third persons, possess the authority of master.

The cases of *L'Arina v. The Brig Exchange*, Bee's Reports, 198, and the *Same v. Manwaring*, 199, are directly in point on this head. There the party was appointed by the master as captain, and cleared the vessel as such at Havana; yet this appointment was held by the court not to give him the legal relation of captain to the vessel, nor

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displace the master appointed by the owners; and it was held that the contract of the latter, within the scope of his authority as master, was still binding upon the owners. The fact, there-  
[ \* 46 ] fore, that Leach \* remained on shore, and sent the vessel upon different voyages under the command of an agent appointed by him, did not of itself displace him; he was still master of the barque, with all the powers and responsibilities which are attached to that character. And if the fact that he remained on shore did not deprive him of his official character, the circumstance that he was engaged during that time in commercial pursuits cannot alter the case. It cannot make any difference in this respect, whether he remained idle or employed himself in any particular pursuit.

But it is said that Leach was not only absent from the barque, but he was employing her in violation of the orders of the owners, who disapproved of his conduct, and had directed him to bring the vessel home, and that Loring & Co. knew it, and yet encouraged and enabled him to go on in the violation of his duty, by large advances of money. And it is insisted, that as Loring & Co. were aiding and encouraging him in this breach of duty, and the supplies in question were furnished to enable him to persevere in it, they were furnished in bad faith to the owners; and in a court of admiralty, acting upon equitable principles, can create no obligation upon them, nor any lien upon their vessel.

If the facts assumed were established by the testimony, I should not dispute the law as above stated. But I think the fact that the owners disapproved of his remaining on shore, and engaging in mercantile pursuits, is not only not established, but, on the contrary, the weight of the testimony is on the other side, and, notwithstanding the evasive and ambiguous answers of Leach, tends strongly to prove that his conduct in this respect met their approbation.

In examining the testimony in relation to this question of fact, it is necessary, in order to see the force to which it is entitled, to state it more minutely than I have done in the preceding part of this opinion, and to note particularly the dates as given by the witness.

The disapproval of the appellants is brought out by the following question, put by the appellants, the owners:

“ Was your remaining in the Pacific and trading with the Laura done with the consent and approval of the owners? ”

To this question Leach simply answers, “ *No, sir.* ”

Upon the cross-examination upon behalf of the libellants, the

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following interrogatories were put to him, to which he gave the following answers:

Question. "When was their (the owners) dissent made known to you?"

\* Answer. "I think it was the second time I was at Val- [ \* 47 ] paraiso, which, I think, was in the latter part of 1849."

Question. "At what period did the owners take efficient steps to displace you?—at any period before Captain Weston was sent out?"

Answer. "They did not take any efficient steps, any further than to request me to come home."

These answers constitute the entire proof of disapproval and dissent of the owners, of which so much has been said in the argument, and which has been so confidently assumed as a fact proved.

It will be observed that the question put by the owners does not point, and clearly was not intended to point, to any disapproval on their part of his remaining on shore, or engaging in trade at Valparaiso. It relates altogether to the employment of the barque in the Pacific, instead of the Atlantic. In fact, it could not have related to his remaining on shore, or engaging in trade, because the notice of disapproval appears to have been given but once, and was given and received while Leach was still sailing the vessel under the "*lay*," and seeking and carrying freights, and before he had purchased a single cargo for himself, or absented himself from her for a single voyage. It was never repeated, although he remained nearly two years afterwards, engaged in commerce, and on shore in the counting-house of the libellants nearly half the time.

The fact is clearly established by Leach's answers to the cross-interrogatories above given. It will be observed that in these answers he says he thinks their disapprobation was made known to him the second time he was at Valparaiso, which he thinks was in the latter part of 1849. Now, in the preceding part of his examination he had stated positively that he arrived at Valparaiso from Rio with a cargo on freight, consigned to Loring & Co., in November, 1849, and arrived there the second time in July, 1850. Without stopping to comment upon the hesitating language, and the vagueness and uncertainty of this answer in relation to a fact which it is obvious, from the preceding part of his testimony, was perfectly in his recollection, it is sufficient to say, that, give him either date, it is evident that the disapproval of the owners had no connection with his mercantile pursuits, and pointed merely to the employment of the *Laura* in freighting voyages on the Pacific, instead of the Atlantic; for if the notice was received by him in

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1849, it was before he had engaged in that coasting trade, and must have been written by the owners in consequence of information given them by Leach from Rio, concerning the freight he had obtained there for Valparaiso, and of his intention to seek [ \* 48 ] \*freights on that coast; for this was his first voyage in the Laura to the Pacific. He had not then engaged in the coasting trade on that ocean, and had done nothing in that respect for the owners to disapprove of. And if he did receive the notice, as he says, in 1849, upon his arrival at Valparaiso, it must have been a disapproval of what he informed them he proposed to do; not of what he was doing or had done. Certainly it had no relation to his trading on his own account, for there is not the slightest evidence that he had any such design at that time, nor for nearly a year afterwards.

And if we take the other date, the argument is equally strong; for, if he received it on that occasion, it must have been written some time before. And it was on his second visit to Valparaiso, in July, 1850, that he for the first time engaged in mercantile pursuits on his own account, and obtained advances for that purpose from Loring & Co. If the notice reached him at that time, and before he commenced his commercial speculations, the dissent must have applied to the place at which he had been seeking freights, and not to his private speculations. Indeed, taking this as the date of the receipt of the notice, the inference is almost irresistible, that the owners must have been apprised of his intention to purchase cargoes on his own account, and approved of it; for he had been engaged, when he received this notice, in seeking freights in the Pacific for about nine months. He had not, it appears, been successful; and after his first cargo from Valparaiso to San Francisco, he sailed most commonly from port to port in ballast, or with very inconsiderable cargoes; and as Leach was in constant correspondence with the owners, they were of course apprised of his want of success, and would very naturally disapprove of his remaining in the Pacific, where the earnings of the vessel would give them very little for their share of the freights. But this notice, as I have said, does not appear to have been repeated. Leach does not pretend that any complaints of his conduct were subsequently made by the owners; and the natural inference is, that having confidence in Leach's prudence and judgment, when in reply to this communication they were apprised by him of his determination to purchase cargoes on his own account for the Laura, and thus insure constant employment for her and full freights, they were willing he should remain and carry out his plan. And this

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conclusion is strengthened by the circumstance that no measures were afterwards taken by the owners to compel or induce him to return, and that he remained without further complaint, engaged in these pursuits until he himself found them unprofitable, and determined to return home.

\* He is asked, in one of the interrogatories: "At what [ \* 49 ] period did the owners take efficient steps to displace you?—at any period before Captain Weston was sent out?" And he answers: "They did not take any efficient steps, any further than to request me to come home." And in answer to another interrogatory he says, he did not yield to their wishes, because he thought he had a right to remain there if he chose. There was no order, therefore; no charge of misconduct; no notice that they would put an end to the contract; nothing more than a request which Leach did not comply with, because he thought that while the owners suffered the contract to continue, he had a right to select the theatre of his operations, and to act upon his own judgment. And undoubtedly he was right in this respect, unless the owners put an end to the contract, which they might have done at any moment, if they supposed him to be no longer acting in the line of his duty. But whatever might have been their opinion as to the soundness of his judgment in selecting the Pacific instead of the Atlantic for the employment of the vessel, when they requested him to return, they undoubtedly acquiesced in his opinion when they received his answer declining to return, and continued for nearly two years afterwards to sanction his conduct, by suffering him to remain there, receiving remittances from him, and paying his drafts, and settling his account, without making the slightest objection to allow him one-half the freights, according to the contract, for his services as master. And the charge of taking the vessel to the Pacific, and illegally detaining her there for his own benefit and advantage, was never heard of until payment for the repairs and supplies furnished to their barque was made by the libellants. And if such a defense had been founded in fact, it would have been easy for the owners to prove it conclusively by producing the correspondence between them and Leach. But no part of it has been offered in evidence. The fair inference from the testimony therefore is, that they assented to his proceedings, and approved of his remaining, after receiving his answer to the request for his return.

But if the case were otherwise in this particular, and it had been proved that Leach illegally and against their orders detained the *Laura* in the Pacific, I do not see how that would affect the claim.



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of the libellants, unless in furnishing those supplies they knowingly aided and abetted him in his breach of duty to the owners. The argument is, that they did knowingly aid and abet him. But it would be a sufficient answer to it to say, that no such charge is made against them in the answer. It is made against Leach; but there is not the slightest intimation that Loring & Co. [ \* 50 ] had any knowledge of it. \* And as this defense is not taken in the answer, it cannot be relied on here, even if there was evidence in the record which would justify it.

But there is not the slightest evidence to prove it. On the contrary, it appears by Leach's testimony, that when he arrived at Valparaiso, with the cargo consigned to Loring & Co., he told them upon what terms he was sailing the vessel, and the deep interest he had in her earnings; and thinks it probable he mentioned the contingent right he had of purchasing one-eighth of the vessel, if he could raise the money to pay for it. The fact that he had been trusted with so much power over such a vessel as the Laura, and would even be received as a partner if he could raise the money, naturally induced Loring & Co. to think him worthy of confidence. And they appear to have aided him in procuring freights, while he confined himself to that business. They evidently had no knowledge of any dissatisfaction on the part of the owners, for Leach states positively that nobody but himself knew of it. And when, therefore, he proposed to purchase cargoes on his own account, which would give the Laura constant employment and full freights, they could have had no reason to suppose that his owners disapproved of it. And when these supplies were furnished, they had strong grounds for believing that his conduct in this respect was known to the owners, and met their approbation; for they had then seen him for nearly two years engaged in this business, during all that time in correspondence with his owners, and occasionally making remittances to them, and drawing bills on them, (as Leach himself states,) which appear to have been duly honored, and without the slightest token of disapproval, as far as Loring & Co. had an opportunity of seeing. There was nothing to create suspicion or put them on inquiry. The advances made to him were made in the regular course of their business, and at the usual rates for interest and commission in that quarter of the world; and they had every reason to believe that they were promoting the objects and advancing the interests of the owners, as the advances made to Leach enabled him to keep the Laura constantly employed with full cargoes, thereby earning large freights, of which the owners were entitled to the one-half. Loring & Co. had no knowl-

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edge of the state of his accounts with the owners; and no reason even for suspecting that he did not remit to them their share of the freights, or that he improperly used or withheld it.

The case, then, upon the points already examined may be summed up as follows:

1st. At the time these repairs were made and supplies \* furnished, Leach was in full possession of the barque, [ \* 51 ] exercising his authority as master, under his contract with the owners hereinbefore stated. 2d. He was recognized and paid as such by the owners. 3d. He was dealt with as such by Loring & Co., in good faith, without the slightest grounds for suspecting that the owners disapproved of his conduct, or had requested him to bring the vessel home. 4th. The repairs and supplies were necessary to enable her to go to sea, and she must have remained idle in the port if they had not been furnished; and they were made and furnished with prudence and economy, under Leach's own direction. 5th. He had no money except the five hundred dollars hereinbefore mentioned, which he needed for his personal expenses, and had no funds either of his own or the owners within his reach, with which he could make these repairs or obtain the necessary supplies.

These facts appear to me to be conclusively established by Leach's own testimony. And as it is admitted, on all hands, that the repairs were made and the supplies furnished at his request and by his order, it follows, from the decisions in this court, and at the circuit to which I have already referred, that, by the maritime code of the United States, Loring & Co. obtained an implied lien on the vessel for the amount, unless it can be shown that they were furnished on the personal credit of Leach or some other person.

An attempt has been made to offer such proof, and to show that the supplies were furnished upon the personal credit of Leach. But it is an obvious failure. He is asked by them whether the repairs and supplies were furnished upon his responsibility? or the credit of the vessel? or how otherwise? He answers, "I presume they were furnished on my responsibility." And this is the whole and only evidence offered by the appellants to show that they were furnished on the personal credit of Leach, and not on that of the vessel or owners. Certainly, such evidence can hardly be sufficient to remove the implied lien given by law. Whether the credit was given to him was a question of fact. If the fact was so, he must have known it, and could have sworn to it in direct terms. But instead of this, he merely expresses an opinion in general terms, and gives no reason for that opinion, and states no fact from which

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The Barque Laura.

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it might be inferred that this opinion was well founded. The answer is, in truth, no evidence; it is but the opinion or conjecture of the witness; and, even if there was no evidence in the record to contradict it, would leave the case upon the implied lien which the law creates.

But it is directly in conflict with the written instruments signed by the witness himself at the time of the transaction.

[ \* 52 ] \* The account for those repairs and supplies is headed, as I have already said, "*Barque Laura and owners, to Loring & Co., Dr.*" It is signed by Leach, and admitted by him, in writing, to be correct. He of course read the account, and was undoubtedly a man of sufficient intelligence to understand the meaning of words. And how could the barque and owners be debtors for those supplies, if they were furnished exclusively on the credit of Leach? How could they be debtors to Loring & Co., unless they were furnished on their credit?

It is true, Leach says he signed the account only for the purpose of verifying the items. But this is evidently an afterthought; for he admits, by his signature, not only the correctness of the items, but the account itself—that is, the charge against the barque and owners, as well as the things charged.

Besides, if his signature was intended merely to verify the items, there was no necessity for this account. The items ought to have been inserted in the other account, signed by him at the same time, which contains the charges for which he was personally liable; and his admission of that account would have been quite sufficient to verify these items. And the fact that two accounts were stated, and signed and admitted by him on the same day, the one charging the repairs and supplies to the barque and owners, and the other charging him, as "Captain Phineas Leach," for other articles properly chargeable to himself, shows that both parties understood what they were about; and, to avoid future cavil, stated their accounts against the respective debtors, according to their mutual understanding at the time. And the insertion of the aggregate amount for repairs and supplies, in the account against Leach, coupled with the account against the barque and owners, proves conclusively that the parties intended to make no special contract with Leach for those repairs and supplies, nor to take any special hypothecation or bottomry on the vessel, but dealt with one another upon the established rules of maritime law, which, in the absence of any special contract, made the barque and owners, and Leach himself, responsible for the amount.

In order to give some color to his statement, that he presumes

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they were furnished on his credit, he says that his credit was at that time good. If he had shown that it was in fact good, it would be no reason for presuming that Loring & Co. relied upon it, and waived the other securities to which they were entitled. But the record shows that it was not good, and that Loring & Co., in the advances they made to him at the same time for the purchase of cargo on his private individual account, did not think it prudent to rely altogether upon \*his credit. For the [ \* 53 ] heading of the invoice of the cargo purchased upon that occasion, which I have already set forth in full, expressly required that the sales and returns should be made by the consignee to Loring & Co. And Leach admits that the cargo was to be insured, and the loss, if any, to be paid to Loring & Co. And from his own testimony, as well as the invoice, it is evident that it was understood by the parties that the proceeds of the cargo were to be remitted from Panama by the consignees to Loring & Co. For he is asked by the libellants, "Was there not an understanding that the proceeds should be remitted by your consignees to Loring & Co.?" and he answers, "I don't know that there was." But he is again pressed by the inquiry, "Will you reflect and see if you cannot answer that question directly that there was?" and he then answers, "There was no such understanding: it might be understood; there was nothing promised." I give the words of the witness; but I cannot be convinced by this nice casuistry of Captain Leach, in distinguishing an understanding between the parties from a promise, that his credit was still good with Loring & Co., notwithstanding the evidence to the contrary in the agreement in the heading of the invoice, and in the admitted agreement in relation to the insurance. It certainly does not prove it so high as to create a presumption that all other securities were waived, from their confidence in the personal responsibility of Leach; nor did his subsequent conduct show that he merited even the confidence they did repose in him. For he went to Panama and procured advances to himself, on account of the cargo, to the amount of \$2,100, and authorized large disbursements to be made by his consignee to his agent, Easton, for the use of the Laura, and proceeded to Massachusetts without returning to Valparaiso; and after he came home, he drew on his consignees for \$375 more to pay Weston's expenses, who was sent out by the owners, and during all that time rendered no account to Loring & Co., and left them under the impression that the proceeds would in good time be remitted to them. It seems they were not aware of the distinction which

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The Barque Laura.

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Leach took between the mutual understanding between them and an actual and formal promise.

The point, therefore, taken by the owners, that the repairs and supplies were furnished on the personal credit of Leach, cannot, in my judgment, be maintained. And, undoubtedly, the justice of the case is clearly with the libellants. The captain was without funds, and his owners had none in Valparaiso; and the barque must have remained in port a wasting hulk if the means [ \* 54 ] had not been furnished by Loring & Co., which \* enabled her to sail. The owners have since received her, and now hold her in their possession, increased in value by those repairs, which enabled her to come home, and which were made by the money of Loring & Co. And they have also received the freights which those repairs enabled her afterwards to earn under the command of Weston. Justice, as well as the principles of the law, would seem to require that those who have reaped the profit of the advances should repay the party to whom they are indebted for their gains.

It remains to inquire whether the lien has been waived, by the delay in prosecuting it, or the debt been satisfied in any other way.

I shall dispose of those questions very briefly. For I am sensible that the great importance and delicacy of the points hereinbefore discussed, have compelled me to extend this discussion beyond the limits of an ordinary opinion in this court.

In relation to the alleged waiver by the delay, the mere statement of the evidence is an answer to the objection, and the evidence is this: The repairs were made and the supplies furnished in the spring of 1852. The barque returned to Valparaiso in the November following, when Weston immediately assumed the command. He was ordered by the owners to procure, if he could, a cargo of guano, and to bring the vessel to an Atlantic port. He did so; and he arrived in Baltimore in the June following, and the vessel was arrested on this libel a few days after her arrival.

The barque still belongs to the same owners. When Weston arrived at Valparaiso to take the command, he had no money, and was obliged to raise what he needed by a bill on his owners. At that time, Loring & Co. had no reason to suppose that the owners would refuse to pay this claim; and if they had then arrested the vessel, it would have broken up the voyage upon which she was destined, and subjected the owners to heavy losses by her detention. And it certainly ought not to be a matter of complaint on their part, that, under such circumstances, he did not arrest her, and took no measures to enforce his claim, until he found that payment

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was refused; and it is unnecessary to cite cases to prove that the omission to arrest her at Valparaiso under such circumstances cannot be regarded as a waiver of their lien, upon any principle of law. There was no unreasonable delay in notifying the owners of the claim, nor in filing the libel when they disputed it. The *Laura* in the intervening time remained in the possession and employment of the owners; no third party had become interested, and the owners were greatly benefited \* by the omission to [ \* 55 ] arrest her until she arrived in the United States.

It is said that Weston proves that nothing was said to him about their account, and hence it is inferred that nothing was due on it, or that it was not supposed by Loring & Co. to be a charge on the *Laura*. But it must be remembered that the house of Loring & Co., with whom Leach dealt, had dissolved partnership in the June preceding Weston's arrival, and a new one, with new partners in it, established under the same name. It is true that Mr. Atherton, a partner in the first firm, remained there, and was attending to their business. But the transactions of Weston were with the new firm, and it would have been useless for Atherton to present this claim to Weston, unless he had determined to libel the vessel. For, as I have said, Weston had no money but what he obtained from the new house of Loring & Co., for his bill on his owners, and this Atherton knew. Besides, the proceeds of her cargo shipped to Peyta and Panama, as hereinbefore mentioned, at the time these repairs and supplies were furnished, were to be paid to Loring & Co.; and when Weston was at Valparaiso, the account of these proceeds had not been received. It was most probably supposed, by Loring & Co., that they might prove sufficient to pay their claim against Leach, including these supplies. And this, it appears, would have been the case if Leach had not improperly converted a large portion of them to his own use, and to satisfy the claims of his owners against him. Justice, therefore, required Loring & Co. to await the result. They did wait, and did receive some money from this source, but not enough to pay even the advances for the cargo itself.

This is admitted in the argument. But it is said the money received should be first applied to extinguish the lien: first, because there was a security bound for that item—that is, the vessel; and secondly, because it is the first item in the account.

Now, the conclusive answer to this objection is, that, if no specific application was made by either party at the time of payment, the law appropriates it according to the principles of equity. And, as the money received from Panama was the proceeds of goods pur-



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chased with the money advanced by Loring & Co. for that purpose, equity will apply it in the first place to the payment of that debt.

Indeed, there is enough in the invoice and the testimony of Leach to show that the proceeds were to be so applied by the agreement between Leach and Loring & Co., when the advances were made. And they were accordingly so applied, as [ \* 56 ] \* far as they would go, when the money was received by them. The fact that the claim now in question was secured by a lien on the Laura, can surely be no reason for applying the money in the first place to discharge it. On the contrary, it would be a sufficient reason against such an application, and would be a good ground for postponing it until all the claims for which the creditor had no security were first satisfied.

I do not comprehend how the argument that it is the first item in the account can apply. In point of fact, however, it is not the first or oldest item in the account, as I understand the transaction. And if the lien on the vessel was originally valid, it is evident that it has never been discharged, or waived, or forfeited by unreasonable delay.

Some other items for necessities furnished at Peyta, on the last voyage of the Laura to that port, and also a small charge for bread at Valparaiso, and which are not included in the account signed by Leach, were allowed by the circuit court, and are included in the amount decreed. These items, the counsel for the respondents insist, ought not to be allowed, even if those in the account are sustained. I think, when the whole testimony is examined, it will be evident that these charges stand on the same principles with those of which I have already spoken. But I forbear to extend this opinion by discussing that question; because, as the court have determined that the repairs and supplies furnished, at the request of Leach, are not a lien on the vessel, it is useless to examine particular items, when the opinion of the court goes to the whole.

From that opinion I respectfully dissent. And, after carefully reviewing the case in all its bearings, and scrutinizing the evidence, I adhere to the opinion I held in the circuit court.

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Ure v. Coffman.

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## THE STEAMBOAT GIPSEY.

JAMES H. URE, Appellant, v. JAMES M. COFFMAN and CYRUS COFFMAN.

19 H. 56.

## ADMIRALTY—COLLISION BETWEEN STEAMBOAT AND FLAT-BOAT.

1. The general doctrine reaffirmed that it is the duty of steamboats to avoid other vessels, especially flat-boats moored to the bank of the river.
2. And though the night be foggy and by no means clear, and the flat-boat had no light, yet, as she lay at a place where flat-boats might be expected, and the steamboat had no occasion to go so near the shore, the latter is liable for the damages resulting from the collision.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and the case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Taylor*, for appellant.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 59 ]

This is an appeal from the circuit court of the United States for the eastern district of Louisiana.

It appears from the record, that the steamer Gipseý was a packet on the Mississippi river, running from New Orleans to Lobdell's Store landing, above Bayou Sara, and, as all the other Mississippi steam river packets do, was in the habit of landing freight and passengers at all the intermediate points and plantations. She was making a trip up the river from New Orleans on the evening of the 21st December, 1853. The night was rainy and dark, and after midnight somewhat foggy. It was light enough, though, for the boats navigating the river to run and to distinguish and make all their landings. All of the witnesses say it was a proper night for running, and none of the packets, or other boats, laid up on that night on account of the weather. Alexander Desarpes, a witness for the claimant, says, "he was the pilot of the Gipseý, and was on watch at the wheel at the time the Gipseý struck the flat-boat. That the collision happened above the point at Trudeau's wood-yard, about fifty-six miles above New Orleans, between twelve and one o'clock at night, on the 22d December, 1853. He says it was a pretty bad night, rainy, dark, and smoky, rather than foggy, with a little fog. There was light enough, however, for the boat to distinguish landings, and she ran and made all of hers of freight and passengers as she went up. Her

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last landing before the collision was one of freight, at J. B. Ar-mant's plantation, on the right-hand side of the river descending, about half a mile below Trudeau's wood-yard. We then crossed the river from there, to go to George Mather's plantation. At

that time the night was dark and rainy, but the shore [ \* 60 ] could be seen for some distance. There was a light \* at

Trudeau's wood-yard on the bank, which is pretty high there, at least fifteen feet above the water; I could see this light a long distance—three or four arpents from the shore; there was a point of land just below the wood-yard; I was looking out when the boat was approaching the shore, for the purpose of *going up that shore* to make a landing; *I could see an outline of the shore, or bank, all along, and distinctly, too*; I did not discover the flat-boat until we were right up against her; the flat-boat was lying close to the bank and in its shadow, and having no light on her I could not see her; she was lying just at the foot of the wood-yard; the light on the bank was a good distance from the flat-boat, and did not shine upon her. As soon as we saw the flat-boat, we stopped the engine of the Gipseý, and backed. If there had been a light on the flat-boat, I could have seen it at a sufficient distance to have avoided the collision, but there was no light on her. As the flat-boat was low down in the water, if there had been a light on her, we should have known it was something down in the water. I saw nobody on watch on the flat-boat at the time of the collision, and heard no hail from her before it." The witness further states that he had been a pilot on the river for more than ten years, "running in this lower trade," and adds, at the time of and before the collision, the weather was such as boats are in the habit of running and making landings, and I, as a pilot, consider that it was safe and proper to run the boat. Mather's landing, where the Gipseý was going to land, was about a quarter of a mile above Trudeau's wood-yard. Upon the cross-interrogation of this witness, he does not give an intelligent or certain statement of the collision, or where or how the Gipseý struck the flat-boat; but says she was tied to a point, and her stern lay a little out from the bank; she laid up and down the river in the same direction with the current; there are curvings in along the bank; the flat was lying at a point fastened, and there are curvings both above and below that point, which was a mere jutting out of the bank in consequence of curvings above and below it. The direct examination being resumed, this witness says, on a clear starlight night, in *such a stage of the water as prevailed at the time of the accident*, we could have seen a flat-boat at a good distance in time to pre-

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vent an accident. If there had been on the flat-boat such a light as is generally carried on deck by a steamboat, or a schooner, or on flat-boats *when they are running*, I could have seen it three or four arpents off, and this would have given me time to avoid the collision.

The evidence of this witness is not in any material particular changed by any other witness examined in the case. It is \*rather confirmed; but the captain of the Gipse<sup>y</sup>, who [ \* 61 ] was also sworn as witness, gives a more certain account of the collision, as to the part of the flat-boat which was struck by the steamer, and by what part of the steamer she was struck. The testimony is conclusive, that the flat being tied to the shore, at what might have been considered a proper and safe place, was struck by the steamer with sufficient force to cut a part of her down, and to sink her in a few minutes. There are three points to be noted in the testimony of Desarpes. The first is, that the steamer, being upward bound, had made a landing at Armant's plantation, about half a mile below Trudeau's wood-yard, and that her next place for making a landing was a quarter of a mile above that, on the opposite side of the river, at Mather's plantation, making the distance between the two places about three quarters of a mile. Secondly, that in his opinion as an experienced pilot, and accustomed to the navigation of the river, there was nothing in the state of the weather to prevent the steamer from being run as usual, and put across the river to make a landing at Mather's plantation, but that she was run so close in shore as to be brought into collision with the flat-boat, and thereby that the witness admits that the only cause of it was, that the flat-boat was lying close to the bank, and so much in its shadow, and not having a light, he could not see her. His language is, that if there had been on the flat-boat such a light as is generally carried on deck by a steamboat or a schooner, or on a flat-boat when they are running, he could have seen it far enough off to have avoided the collision.

Captain Ure, then in command of the Gipse<sup>y</sup>, gives the same account, scarcely with a variance, of the navigation of his vessel from Armant's plantation until the collision had occurred, but says, with more positiveness than his pilot spoke, that the forward end of the Gipse<sup>y</sup>—some part of the bow pretty far forward—struck the flat-boat. His language is, that he “was on the roof of the steamer in front all the time, when they had made their landing at Armant's, up to the moment of the collision. From Armant's we ran the bend of the river on the same side a short distance, and then crossed over to make a landing at Mather's, above Trudeau's

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wood-yard. There was a light above the wood-pile, but I saw nothing but its glare before the collision, the wood-pile being between the light and my eyes. I could see the glare some three or five minutes before the collision took place. We had almost hit the flat-boat when I saw it. I was looking out and saw the boat, seeing its outline pretty clearly about the same time that I saw the glare of the light spoken of. It was the shadow of the bank, which is high there, which prevented me from seeing. *If* [ \* 62 ] *there had \* been on the flat-boat any such light as flat-boats usually carry, I could have seen it in time to avoid hitting her.*" He further says, "the night was slightly foggy and bad, and it had been raining, but cannot recollect whether it was raining at the time of the collision. There was no fog until we came to Armant's, and after we left Armant's the fog came on, and I think that smoke was mixed with the fog. We did not lay up that night for fog, but ran all night." Other witnesses were examined by the claimants, but it is not necessary to notice their testimony further than to say, that neither of them give any additional facts concerning the navigation of the steamer from Armant's plantation, or concerning the collision, contradictory from what was said of both by Captain Ure and his pilot Desarpes.

Trying, then, the claimant's case only by the evidence introduced by himself, it is obvious that the steamer was put across the river from Armant's in a state of weather and on a night proper for running, without proper care to make her next landing at Mather's, which was at least a quarter of a mile above the wood-yard, a little below which the flat-boat was moored. Both the pilot and the captain attempt to indicate the place and the part of the steamer which was first in contact with the flat-boat, by mathematical figures. If that of the pilot's is taken as the fact of the case, it must be conceded that the Gipse was put across the river a little below where the flat-boat laid, and so near the bank that she could not have been run above her, by pursuing that course, without a collision. Running so near to the bank, when there was ample channel way further out in the river for the steamer to pass the point and curve made by it, at which and within which the flat-boat was fastened, was a want of proper care. Both pilot and captain knew that the wood-yard and its immediate vicinity was a point of the river at which boats were customarily moored at night, as a place of safety against collisions from ascending or descending boats, and should have run the steamer further out in the river to avoid all chance of collision with boats tied to the bank or wood-yard; and in this instance, there was no occasion for the steamer having been run

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so near to the bank of the river, as it was not intended to make a landing at the wood-yard, but to pass it to a landing higher up. The collision, according to the pilot's account of it, was caused by the steamer not having been kept on a course further out from the bank. That, of itself, is sufficient to make her answerable for all the consequences of it, without any regard to the fact that the flat-boat had not a light. A light upon her might, in the language of the witness, have enabled him to have avoided the collision by putting the steamer further out in the river, but \*the [ \* 63 ] want of a light was not the cause of it. The cause was, that the steamer's course was too near on shore. But if the captain's account of the collision is taken as the fact of the case, as we think it ought to be, the steamer is altogether without excuse, for she was put across the river without due care as to her course, and would have been run bow on into the bank, at the point where the flat-boat was fastened, if she had not been stopped by the collision. In such a view of the case as we have given from the testimony of the claimant's witnesses, it is not necessary for us to consider the point made by the witnesses, and by counsel in the argument, that the flat-boat had not a light to show herself or her mooring during the night. Tied, as she was, in a recess of the land, with a point of land extending into the river below the wood-yard, there was no necessity for her to show a light to protect her from boats ascending or descending the river, or from landing, which might be made at the wood-yard, as she was actually fastened to the bank, out of the line of a customary and safe navigation up or down the river. In other words, the steamer was either run closer into the bank than was necessary or usual at that point of the river, and out of what should have been her course to make her landing at Mather's, or she was run head upon the flat-boat, where the latter was tied to the bank. When a boat or vessel of any kind is fastened for the night at a landing place, to which other boats may have occasion to make a landing in the night, it is certainly prudent for her position to be designated by a light on her own account, as well as that the vessel making a landing may have light to do so. But when a vessel is tied to the bank of a river, not in a port or harbor, or at a place of landing, out of the line of customary navigation, there is no occasion for her to show a light, nor has it ever been required that she should do so.

After the best examination of this case, we are of the opinion that the steamer Gipseey was put across the river from Armant's, in the prosecution of the intention to make another landing with her at Mather's plantation, without skill or prudence, and that the col-



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lision with the flat-boat was the consequence of it, without any fault or want of care by those navigating it. There is, therefore, no ground for reducing the damages given by the district and circuit courts to the owners of the flat-boat.

Having examined the record very fully as to the items making up the aggregate of damage given by those decrees, we affirm the decree of the circuit court in the case.

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**JAMES STEVENS, Plaintiff in Error, v. ROYAL GLADDING and another.**

19 H. 64.

NO BILL OF EXCEPTIONS, NO ERROR.

Where a case has been submitted to a jury on plea of not guilty, and there was a verdict for defendants, and no bill of exceptions is found in the record, there is nothing of which the court can predicate error during the trial, and the judgment must be affirmed.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the district of Rhode Island.

The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Stevens* appeared for himself.

*Mr. Ames*, for defendant.

[ \* 65 ] \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Rhode Island.

An action was brought by the plaintiff in the circuit court, alleging that he was the author of a topographical map of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, surveyed trigonometrically by himself, the copyright of which he secured under the act of congress of 3d April, 1831, entitled "An act to amend the several acts respecting copyrights;" and he avers a special compliance with all the requisites of said act, to vest in him the copyright of said map or chart. And he charges the defendants with having published two thousand copies of his map, and sold them within two years before the commencement of the action, in violation of his right, secured as aforesaid, to his damage four thousand dollars.

The defendants pleaded not guilty. The case was submitted to a jury, who returned a verdict of not guilty. A judgment was entered against the plaintiff for costs.

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Lathrop v. Judson.

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A writ of error was procured, and bond given to prosecute it with effect.

The defendant in proper person assigns for error, "that the verdict and judgment were given against the plaintiff in error, whereas the verdict and judgment should have been given for the plaintiff, and he prays a reversal of the judgment on this ground."

In a very short argument, the plaintiff in error says, the \* principal questions are: Was the verdict and judgment correct? Was the sale of the engraved plate, on execution, the sale of the copyright? Did such sale authorize the defendants, or any other person, to print and sell this literary production, still subsisting under a copyright in the plaintiff? And he refers to 14 Howard, 528, *Stevens v. Cady*. In that case this court held that a sale of the copperplate for a map, on execution, does not authorize the purchaser to print the map.

Two or three depositions, not certified with the record, were handed to the court as having been omitted by the clerk in making up the record; but it does not appear that they were used in the trial before the circuit court; and if it did so appear, no instructions were asked of the court to the jury, to lay the foundation of error.

It is to be regretted that the plaintiff in error, in undertaking to manage his own case, has omitted to take the necessary steps to protect his interest. There is no error appearing on the record which can be noticed by this court; the judgment of the circuit court is therefore affirmed with costs.

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C. C. LATHROP, Plaintiff in Error, v. CHARLES JUDSON.

19 H. 66.

NO BILL OF EXCEPTIONS—NO ERROR SHOWN.

1. Where plaintiff in error relies on a ruling of the court at the trial to reverse the judgment here, that ruling must be shown by bill of exceptions, or in some other mode be made to appear on the record, or it will not be noticed.
2. This rule is so well settled that, in the absence of anything in the record which relates to the error assigned, the court will affirm the judgment with damages.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana. The case is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Taylor*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for defendant.

Moore v. Greene.

[ \* 68 ] \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana.

The action was brought on a judgment rendered by the supreme court of Louisiana; certain matters were set up in the circuit court, as a defense, all of which were overruled, and judgment was entered for eighteen hundred and ten dollars, with interest and costs. The only errors assigned in this court, on which a reversal of the judgment of the circuit court is prayed, are: 1, that at the time suit was brought on the judgment, in the circuit court, an execution had been issued on the same judgment in the State court, which was in full force, and on which a seizure had been made; and 2, that the circuit court erred in holding that the indebtedment was not founded on a Louisiana contract.

These exceptions were not taken in the progress of the trial in the circuit court, and do not appear on the record. The [ \* 69 ] \* fact that an execution was issued and returned appears in the record of the State court, but it was not made a part of the record of the circuit court, by bill of exceptions, and it cannot now be noticed. There is no ground of error on the face of the record, for the action of this court. The judgment of the circuit court is affirmed with ten per cent. damages.

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ELIZABETH MOORE, Appellant, v. RAY GREENE and another.

19 H. 69.

LAPSE OF TIME—SPECIFIC STATEMENTS REQUIRED IN CHARGING FRAUD IN BILL.

1. In a bill brought to set aside a sale for fraud, made under the direction of a probate court, eighty years after said sale was made, the bill should be very specific in its allegations of fraud; and the time of discovering it, and the proof very clear.
2. In such case it is not necessary for those claiming under the sale by order of the probate court to prove the regularity of its proceedings, but the party assailing the title must prove the fraud or other illegality.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the district of Rhode Island. The facts are stated in the opinion on which the judgment is founded.

*Mr. Randall*, for appellant.

*Mr. Bradley*, for appellees.

[ \* 70 ] \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal in chancery from the circuit court for the district of Rhode Island.

The bill was filed to set aside certain titles for frauds alleged to have been committed in the year 1767, by a father against his own children, for the benefit of strangers. The frauds are stated to have been investigated and sanctioned, directly or indirectly, by the court of probate, by referees chosen by the parties to determine their matters of controversy, and by the highest courts of the State.

\* The legal history of the case commences in July, 1767, [ \* 71 ] by the execution of a deed by the administrator of John Manton to Waterman and Pearce. From this period, a series of events are detailed, genealogical and historical, sweeping over near a century. Acts are stated in the bill, as it would seem, from mere vague reports, and sometimes resting on conjectures. And many of the facts set forth, if proved, and were of modern occurrence, would not be sufficient to avoid the titles enumerated; but the facts are denied generally by the answers, and not sufficiently proved by the evidence.

The lands when sold were comparatively of little value, but, by the progress of time and the advance of improvements, they are now covered with large manufacturing establishments and flourishing villages. Generation after generation has risen up and passed away, of individuals connected with these titles, who increased the value of the property by their large expenditures; and the property, by deed or will, or by the law of descents, has been transmitted through the generations that have passed, without doubt as to the legal ownership.

The bill was filed in 1851; its averments of facts, by which the lapse of time and the statute of limitations are sought to be avoided, are loose and unsatisfactory. The adverse entry is alleged to have been made, under the deed of the administrator of Manton, in 1767; and it appears that Betty Waterman, the complainant's grandmother, through whom the title is claimed to have descended, was born in 1756. She was of age in 1777, and in ten years afterward her right was barred by the statute. It is true, the date of her coverture does not appear, but as she was only eleven years of age in 1767, she could not then have been married; and if her marriage occurred subsequently, it was a cumulative disability, which is not allowed by the statute of Rhode Island. The complainant became of age, as it appears, in 1815, and her ten years expired in 1825. Her disability of coverture, and it was cumulative, expired in 1840, more than ten years before the bill was filed.

The complainant avers that from the death of John Manton, in 1767, to 1822-'3, and '4, his estates were the subjects of legal con-

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Betts v. Lewis.

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troversy and litigation in courts of law; and that ever since, renewed and continued claims and demands, by the heirs of Lydia Thornton and Betty Carpenter, for their proportion of said estates, as his rightful heirs at law, upon the assignees of the Manton estate, and upon all persons deriving title under them, have been continuously prosecuted. But prosecutions to stop the operations of the statute must be successful, and lead to a change in the possession.

[ \* 72 ] \* When fraud is alleged as a ground to set aside a title, the statute does not begin to run until the fraud is discovered; and this is the ground on which the complainant asks relief. But, in such a case, the bill must be specific in stating the facts and circumstances which constitute the fraud; and also as to the time it was discovered. This is necessary to enable the defendants to meet the fraud, and the alleged time of its discovery. In these respects the bill is defective, and the evidence is still more so.

The complainant's counsel seem to suppose, that as the defendants in their answer admit the property, at least in part, was originally acquired under a sale of Manton's administrator, they are bound to show the proceedings were not only conformable to law, but that they must go further, and prove the debts for which it was sold were due and owing by the deceased. So far from this being the legal rule, under the circumstances of this case, the presumptions are in favor of the present occupants, and the complainants must show the administrator's sale was illegal and void. After an adverse possession of more than eighty years, when the facts have passed from the memory, and, as in this case, the papers are not to be found in the probate court, no court can require of the defendants proof in regard to such sale. The burden of proof falls upon him who attempts to disturb a possession of ages, transmitted and enjoyed under the forms of law.

Whether we consider the great lapse of time, and the change in the value of the property, or the statutes of limitation, the right of the complainant is barred. The decree of the circuit court is affirmed.

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19h 72  
L-ed 576  
38f 550

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BURR H. BETTS, Appellant, v. JOHN H. LEWIS and Wife.

19 H. 72.

PRACTICE IN CHANCERY IN CIRCUIT COURTS.

1. A bill in chancery in circuit court cannot be dismissed for want of jurisdiction on motion made after answer, and while the parties are perfecting the pleading, the practice in the State courts notwithstanding.

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The United States v. Le Baron.

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2. It should not be dismissed on that ground until the hearing, because the parties might perfect the bill before final hearing.

APPEAL from the district court for the northern district of Alabama. The case is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Butler*, for appellant.

*Mr. Johnson*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 73 ]

This is an appeal from the decree of the district court of the United States for the northern district of Alabama, having the powers of a circuit court. The appellant filed his bill in that court to charge a legacy on property alleged to have come to the hands of the respondents, and to be chargeable with its payment. After answers had been filed, and while exceptions to one of the answers were pending, the respondents moved to dismiss the bill for want of equity, and the court ordered it to be dismissed. This was irregular, and the decree must be reversed. It is understood to be in conformity with the practice of the State courts of Alabama to entertain such a motion at any stage of the proceedings. But the equity practice of the courts of the United States is governed by the rules prescribed by this court, under the authority conferred upon it by the act of congress, (*McDonald v. Smalley*, 1 Pet. 620,) and is the same in all the States. And this practice does not sanction the dismissal of the bill on a motion made while the parties are perfecting the pleadings. The question whether the bill contains any equity may be raised by a demurrer. If the defendant answer, this question cannot be raised until the hearing. *Non constat* that a defect may not be removed before the hearing.

The case must be remanded to the circuit court, and if any defects exist in the bill capable of being cured by amendments, as no replication has been filed, it is within the rules of ordinary practice to allow them to be made.

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THE UNITED STATES v. LE BARON.

THE SAME v. STEWART.

19 H. 73.

OFFICIAL BOND—TAKES EFFECT ON DELIVERY—COMMISSION OF OFFICER VALID, THOUGH NOT DELIVERED TO HIM UNTIL AFTER PRESIDENT'S DEATH.

1. Where a person has been nominated for an office, his nomination confirmed by the senate, and his commission been sealed and signed by the president, his appointment to that office is complete.



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The United States v. Le Baron.

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2. The death of the president before the commission reaches the officer does not affect it.
3. A bond to secure the performance of the duties of a deputy postmaster is operative from the time it reaches the postmaster general and is approved by him, and the recitals of the bond relate to that date.
4. Hence, where a bond recited that: whereas O. B. is now postmaster at Mobile, and he was, at the date of the bond, acting as postmaster under a previous appointment, it shall be held to be a security for his duties under a new appointment, confirmed subsequently to the date of the bond, but before it was delivered to the postmaster general for approval.
5. This principle holds the sureties on such bond for the duties of the officer under the latter appointment.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the southern district of Alabama.

The case is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the United States.

*Mr. Stewart*, for appellee.

[ \* 75 ] \* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the circuit court of the United States for the southern district of Alabama, in an action of debt, founded on an official bond of Oliver S. Beers, as deputy postmaster at Mobile, the defendant being one of his sureties.

It appeared, on the trial in the circuit court, that Beers was appointed to that office by the president of the United States, during the recess of the senate, and received a commission, bearing date in April, 1849, to continue in force until the end of the next session of the senate, which terminated on the thirtieth day of September, 1850.

It also appeared, that in April, 1850, Beers was nominated by the president to the senate, as deputy postmaster at Mobile; and the nomination having been duly confirmed, a commission was made out and signed by President Taylor, bearing date on the twenty-second day of April, 1850; but it had not been transmitted to Beers on the first day of July, 1850, when the bond declared on bears date. Beers took charge of the post office at Mobile before his second appointment, and continued to act, without intermission, until he was removed from office in February, 1853. The default, assigned as a breach of the bond, was admitted to have occurred under his second appointment; and the principal question upon this writ of error is, whether the bond declared on secures the faithful performance of the duties of the office under the first or under the second appointment.

The condition of the bond recites: "Whereas the said Oliver S. Beers is deputy postmaster at Mobile aforesaid," &c.

The first inquiry is, to what date is this recital to be referred? The district judge, who presided at the trial, ruled that it referred to the office held by Beers when the bond was signed. The delivery of a deed is presumed to have been made on the day of its date. But this presumption may be removed by evidence that it was delivered on some subsequent day; and when a delivery on some subsequent day is shown, the deed speaks on that subsequent day, and not on the day of its date.

In Clayton's case, (5 Co. 1,) a lease, bearing date on the 26th of May, to hold for three years "from henceforth," was \*delivered on the 20th of June. It was resolved, that [ \* 76 ] "from henceforth" should be accounted from the day of delivery of the indentures, and not from the day of their date; for the words of an indenture are not of any effect until delivery—*traditio loqui facit chartam*.

So in *Ozkey v. Hicks*, Cro. Jac. 263, by a charter-party, under seal, bearing date on the 8th of September, it was agreed that the defendant should pay for a moiety of the corn which then was, or afterwards should be, laden on board a certain vessel. The defendant pleaded that the deed was not delivered until the 28th of October, and that on and after that day there was no corn on board; and on demurrer, it was held a good plea, because the word *then* was to be referred to the time of the delivery of the deed, and not to its date.

And the modern case of *Steele v. March*, 4 B. and C. 272, is to the same point. A lease purported on its face to have been made on the 25th of March, 1783, *habendum* from the 25th of March *now last past*. It was proved that the delivery was made after the day of the date, and the court of king's bench held that the word *now* referred to the time of delivery, and not to the date of the indenture.

At the trial in the circuit court, it appeared that on the day after the date of the bond, Beers, in obedience to instructions from the postmaster general, deposited it, together with a certificate of his oath of office under his last appointment, in the mail, addressed to the postmaster general at Washington.

In *Broome v. The United States*, 15 How. 143, it was held that a collector's bond might be deemed to be delivered when it was put in a course of transmission to the comptroller of the treasury, whose duty it is to examine and approve or reject such bonds. But this decision proceeded upon the ground that the act of congress requiring these bonds, and their approval, had allowed the collector to exercise his office for three months without a bond; and that consequently the approval and delivery were not necessarily simulta-

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neous acts, nor need the approval precede the delivery; and the distinction between bonds of collectors and those of postmasters is there adverted to. The former may take and hold office for three months without a bond. The latter must give bond, with approved security, on their appointment; and there is no time allowed them, after entering on their offices, to comply with this requirement. The bond must therefore be accepted by the postmaster general, as sufficient in point of amount and security, before it can have any effect as a contract. Otherwise, the postmaster might [ \* 77 ] enter on the office merely on giving \* a bond, which on its presentation, the postmaster general might reject as insufficient.

In other words, the person appointed might act without any operative bond, which, we think, was not intended by Congress. It is like the case of *Bruce et al. v. The State of Maryland*, 11 Gill and John. 382, where it was held that the bond of a sheriff took effect only when approved by the county court; because it was only on such approval that the sheriff was authorized to act.

The purpose of the obligee was to become security for one legally authorized to exercise the office; not for one who enters on it unlawfully, because he failed to comply with the requirement to furnish an approved bond; and this purpose can be accomplished only by holding that the appointee cannot act, and the bond cannot take effect, until it is approved. Our opinion is, therefore, that this bond speaks only from the time when it reached the postmaster general, and was accepted by him; that until that time it was only an offer, or proposal of an obligation, which became complete and effectual by acceptance; and that, unlike the case of a collector's bond, which is not a condition precedent to his taking office, and which may be intended to have a retrospective operation, the bond of a postmaster, given on his appointment, cannot be intended to relate back to any earlier date than the time of its acceptance, because it is only after its acceptance that there can be any such holding of the office as the bond was meant to apply to.

Now, at the time when this bond was accepted by the postmaster general, Beers had been nominated and confirmed as deputy postmaster; he had given bond in such a penalty, and with such security, as was satisfactory to the postmaster general; he had taken the oath of office, and there was evidence that a certificate thereof had been filed in the general post office.

Upon this state of facts, we are of opinion that at that time his holding under the first appointment had been superseded by his holding under the second appointment; and when the bond says,

“is now postmaster,” it refers to such holding under the second appointment, and is a security for the faithful discharge of his duties under the second appointment.

It was suggested at the argument, that this bond was not, in point of fact, taken in reference to the new appointment, but was a new bond, called for by the postmaster general under the authority conferred on him by the act of July 2, 1836. 5 Stats. at Large, 88, sec. 37.

To this there are several answers. No such ground appears to have been taken at the trial, and the rulings of the court, \* which were excepted to by the plaintiffs in error, pre- [ \* 78 ] cluded any such inquiry. These rulings were, that the holding to which the bond referred was a holding on the first day of July, and that Beers was in office on that day under the first appointment, and not under the second. This put an end to the claim, and rendered a verdict for the defendant inevitable.

But if this were otherwise, parol or extraneous evidence that the bond was not intended to apply to the holding under the second appointment, because it was a new bond taken to supersede an old one, would be open to the objections which the defendants in error have so strenuously urged.

There is no ambiguity in the bond. It refers to a holding at some particular date. The law determines that date to be the time when the bond took effect. Nothing remains but to determine upon the facts, under which appointment Beers then held; this also the law settles, and when it has thus been ascertained that he then held under the second appointment, evidence to show that the bond was not intended to apply to that appointment would directly contradict the bond, for it would show it was not intended to apply to the appointment which Beers then held, while the bond declares it was so intended. The defendant in error further insists that Beers was not in office, under the second appointment, at the time this bond took effect, because the commission sent to him was signed by President Taylor, and was not transmitted until after his death.

When a person has been nominated to an office by the president, confirmed by the senate, and his commission has been signed by the president, and the seal of the United States affixed thereto, his appointment to that office is complete. Congress may provide, as it has done in this case, that certain acts shall be done by the appointee before he shall enter on the possession of the office under his appointment. These acts then become conditions precedent to the complete investiture of the office; but they are to be performed

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The United States v. Le Baron.

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by the appointee, not by the executive; all that the executive can do to invest the person with his office has been completed when the commission has been signed and sealed; and when the person has performed the required conditions, his title to enter on the possession of the office is also complete.

The transmission of the commission to the officer is not essential to his investiture of the office. If, by any inadvertence or accident, it should fail to reach him, his possession of the office is as lawful as if it were in his custody. It is but evidence of those acts of appointment and qualification which constitute his title, and [ \* 79 ] which may be proved by other \* evidence, where the rule of law requiring the best evidence does not prevent.

It follows from these premises, that when the commission of a postmaster has been signed and sealed, and placed in the hands of the postmaster general to be transmitted to the officer, so far as the execution is concerned, it is a completed act. The officer has then been commissioned by the president pursuant to the constitution; and the subsequent death of the president, by whom nothing remained to be done, can have no effect on that completed act. It is of no importance that the person commissioned must give a bond and take an oath, before he possesses the office under the commission; nor that it is the duty of the postmaster general to transmit the commission to the officer when he shall have done so. These are acts of third persons. The president has previously acted to the full extent which he is required or enabled by the constitution and laws to act in appointing and commissioning the officer; and to the benefit of that complete action the officer is entitled, when he fulfills the conditions on his part, imposed by law.

We are of opinion, therefore, that Beers was duly commissioned under his second appointment.

For these reasons, we hold the judgment of the circuit court to have been erroneous, and it must be reversed, and the cause remanded with directions to award a *venire facias de novo*.

<p>THE UNITED STATES, Plaintiffs in Error,  v.  GEORGE N. STEWART.</p>	}	<p><i>In error to the circuit court of the  United States for the southern  district of Alabama.</i></p>
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Mr. Justice CURTIS. The opinion of the court, in the preceding case, determines this, and the judgment of the circuit court must be reversed, in conformity with that opinion.

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Willot v. Sandford.

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SEBASTIAN WILLOT and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. JOHN F. A.  
SANDFORD.

19 H. 79.

SPANISH GRANTS IN MISSOURI—CONFLICT IN CONFIRMATIONS.

1. In an action of ejectment, where the contest is between conflicting confirmations of Spanish grants, the prior confirmation and survey must prevail, and the jury are not at liberty to consider whether the survey and patent correspond with the confirmation.
2. The act of congress of March 3, 1811, reserving lands from sale which had been claimed before a board of commissioners, has no application to such a case as this.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the district of Missouri.  
The facts are sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Blair*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Lawrence*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 80 ]

Peter Chouteau, claiming under one Dissonet, laid before Recorder Bates a claim for 800 arpents of land, situate in St. \* Charles county, Missouri. The evidence presented [ \* 81 ] to the recorder was a certificate of a private survey embracing the claim as set up, with proof that Dissonet had inhabited and cultivated the land from 1798 to 1805. The recorder pronounced the claim valid as a settlement right to the extent of 640 acres, and declared that it ought to be surveyed as nearly in a square as might be, so as to include Dissonet's improvements; and, furthermore, that the land should be surveyed at the expense of the United States.

This report was confirmed by Congress, by the act of April 29, 1816. The land was surveyed in 1817, by authority of the United States. A patent certificate was forwarded to the general land office by the recorder of land titles at St. Louis, in 1823, and a patent issued on it in 1850. Protection is claimed by the defendants, under the survey and patent.

The jury was instructed by the circuit court, that the survey and patent were not conclusive evidence that the land they embraced was correctly located and surveyed according to the confirmation; and if they believed that the land sued for was not within the confirmation of the legal representatives of Dissonet, although it may be within the survey and patent, then the survey and patent would not protect the defendants.

Exceptions were taken to this ruling. The jury found that the



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official survey did not correspond to the confirmation, but that it was illegally extended so as to interfere with the claim on which the plaintiff relies. His claim is this: In 1805, Antoine Lamarche caused a private survey to be made by Harvey for 750 arpents of land, which he claimed by right of settlement. Lamarche laid his claim before the board of commissioners, but produced no evidence of inhabitation and cultivation; indeed, no evidence at all, except the surveyor's certificate. On coming before the board, in 1811, the claim was of course rejected; and thus it lay until 1833, when the board of commissioners organized under the act of July 9, 1832, took evidence which established the fact to their satisfaction, that Lamarche had inhabited and cultivated the land, and was entitled to a confirmation; and in 1835 they recommended to congress that the claim ought to be confirmed according to Harvey's survey of 1805; and it was thus confirmed by the act of July 4, 1836.

Harvey's survey covers the land in dispute, which is overlapped on its eastern boundary by the survey and calls of the patent to Dissonet; and within this interference the defendants hold possession.

Up to the date of the confirmation of Lamarche's claim, [ \* 82 ] in \* 1836, it had no standing in a court of justice. So this court has uniformly held. *Les Bois v. Brommell*, 4 Howard.

In the next place, the United States reserved the power to survey and grant claims to lands in the situation that these contending claims were when confirmed; nor have the courts of justice any authority to disregard surveys and patents, when dealing with them in actions of ejectment. This court so held in the case of *West v. Cochran*, and will not repeat here what is there said.

When the survey of 1817 for Dissonet's land was recognized at the surveyor general's office as properly executed, which was certainly as early as 1823, then Dissonet had a title that he could enforce by the laws of Missouri, and which was the elder and better; it being settled that where there are two confirmations for the same land, the elder must hold it. A more prominent instance to this effect could hardly occur, than that of rejecting the younger confirmation in the case of *Les Bois v. Brommell*, above cited.

The act of 1811, reserving lands from sale which had been claimed before a board of commissioners, has no application to such a case as this one. It was so declared in the case of *Menard v. Massey*, 8 Howard, 309, 310.

It is ordered, that the judgment of the circuit court be reversed, and a *venire de novo* awarded.

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Vandewater v. Mills.

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## THE STEAMSHIP YANKEE BLADE.

ROBERT J. VANDEWATER, Appellant, v. EDWARD MILLS.

19 H. 82.

## ADMIRALTY—MARITIME LIENS.

1. A contract between the owners of different vessels to form a line to carry passengers and cargo, meeting at a given point of the line to exchange, and fixing the proportion of the freight to be received by each party, is not a maritime contract, and the remedy for a breach of it is at common law.
2. The doctrine of the mutual obligation and mutual lien, as between the cargo and the vessel, can have no place until a cargo is on board the vessel.
3. No such contract for the future employment of the vessel creates any lien upon it for the performance of such a contract.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the district of California.

The case is well stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Cutting*, for appellant.

*Mr. Blair*, for appellee.

\*Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 88 ]

The libel in this case sets forth a contract between the owners of certain steamboats, of which the Yankee Blade was one, \*to convey freight and passengers between New [ \* 89 ] York and California. Among other things, it was agreed that the America should proceed to Panama, and the Yankee Blade should leave New York at such time as to connect with the America. The owner of the Yankee Blade refused to employ his vessel according to this agreement, and sent her to the Pacific under a contract with other persons. For this breach of contract the libellant demands damages, assuming that the vessel is subject, under the maritime law, to a lien which may be enforced *in rem* in a court of admiralty.

The circuit court dismissed the libel, being of opinion "that the instrument is of a description unknown to the maritime law; that it contains no express hypothecation of the vessel, and the law does not imply one."

In support of his allegation of error in this decree, the learned counsel for the appellant has endeavored to establish the following proposition:

"Agreements for carrying passengers are maritime contracts, pertaining exclusively to the business of commerce and navigation, and consequently may be enforced specifically against the vessel by courts of admiralty proceeding *in rem*."

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The Steamship Yankee Blade.

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Assuming, for the present, the premises of this proposition to be true, let us inquire whether the conclusion is a legitimate consequence therefrom.

The maritime "privilege" or lien is adopted from the civil law, and imports a tacit hypothecation of the subject of it. It is a "*jus in re*," without actual possession or any right of possession. It accompanies the property into the hands of a *bona fide* purchaser. It can be executed and divested only by a proceeding *in rem*. This sort of proceeding against personal property is unknown to the common law, and is peculiar to the process of courts of admiralty. The foreign and other attachments of property in the State courts, though by analogy loosely termed proceedings *in rem*, are evidently not within the category. But this privilege or lien, though adhering to the vessel, is a secret one; it may operate to the prejudice of general creditors and purchasers without notice; it is therefore "*stricti juris*," and cannot be extended by construction, analogy, or inference. "Analogy," says Pardessus, (*Droit Civ.* vol. 3, 597,) "cannot afford a decisive argument, because privileges are of *strict right*. They are an exception to the rule by which all creditors have equal rights in the property of their debtor, and an exception should be declared and described in express words; we cannot arrive at it by reasoning from one case to another."

These principles will be found stated, and fully vindicated [ \* 90 ] by authority, in the cases of *The Young Mechanic*, 2 Curtis, 404, and *Kiersage*, *Ibid.* 421; see also *Harmer v. Bell*, 22 E. L. and E. 62.

Now, it is a doctrine not to be found in any treatise on maritime law, that every contract by the owner or master of a vessel, for the future employment of it, hypothecates the vessel for its performance. This lien or privilege is founded on the rule of maritime law as stated by Cleirac, (597:) "*Le batel est obligée à la marchandise et la marchandise au batel.*" The obligation is mutual and reciprocal. The merchandise is bound or hypothecated to the vessel for freight and charges, (unless released by the covenants of the charter-party,) and the vessel to the cargo. The bill of lading usually sets forth the terms of the contract, and shows the duty assumed by the vessel. Where there is a charter-party, its covenants will define the duties imposed on the ship. Hence it is said, (1 Valin, *Ordon. de Mar.* b. 3, tit. 1, art. 11,) that "the ship, with her tackle, the freight, and the cargo, are respectively bound (*affectée*) by the covenants of the charter-party." But this duty of the vessel, to the performance of which the law binds her by hypothecation, is to deliver the cargo at the time and place stipu-

lated in the bill of lading or charter-party, without injury or deterioration. If the cargo be not placed on board, it is not bound to the vessel, and the vessel cannot be in default for the non-delivery, in good order, of goods never received on board. Consequently, if the master or owner refuses to perform his contract, or for any other reason the ship does not receive cargo and depart on her voyage according to contract, the charterer has no privilege or maritime lien on the ship for such breach of the contract by the owners, but must resort to his personal action for damages, as in other cases.

See 2 Boulay, Paty Droit Com. and Mar. 299, where it is said, "Hors ces deux cas, (viz: default in delivery of the goods, or damages for deterioration,) il n'y a pas de privilege à pretendre de la part du marchand chargeur; car si les dommages et intérêts n'ont lieu que pour refus de depart du navire, pour depart tardif ou precipité, pour saisie du navire ou autrement il est evident que a cet egard la créance est simple et ordinaire, sans aucune sorte de privilege."

Thus, in the case of the City of London, (1 W. Robinson, 89,) it was decided that a mariner who had been discharged from a vessel after articles had been signed, might proceed in the admiralty in a suit for wages, the voyage for which he was engaged having been prosecuted; but if the intended voyage be altogether abandoned by the owner, the seaman must seek his remedy at common law by action on the case.

\* And this court has decided, in the case of The Schooner [ \* 91 ] Freeman v. Buckingham, 18 Howard, 188, "that the law creates no lien on a vessel as a security for the performance of a contract to transport cargo, until some lawful contract of affreightment is made, and a cargo shipped under it."

Now, the damages claimed by the libellant, in this case, are not for the non-delivery of merchandise or cargo at the time and place according to the covenants of a charter-party, or for their injury or deterioration on the voyage, but for a refusal of the owners to employ the vessel in carrying passengers and freight from New York, so as to connect with the America, when she should arrive at Panama. The owners have not made it a part of their agreement that their respective vessels should be mutually hypothecated as security for the performance of their agreement; and, as we have shown, there is no tacit hypothecation, privilege, or lien, given by the maritime law.

We have examined this case from this point of view, because the libel seems to take it for granted that every breach of contract, where the subject-matter is a ship employed in navigating the

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The Brig Neurea.

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ocean, gives a privilege or lien on the vessel for the damages consequent thereon, and because it was assumed in the argument, that if this contract was in the nature of a charter-party, or had some features of a charter-party, the court would extend the maritime lien by analogy or inference, for the sake of giving the libellant this remedy, and sustaining our jurisdiction. But we have shown this conclusion is not a correct inference from the premises, and that this lien, being *stricti juris*, will not be extended by construction. It is, moreover, abundantly evident that this contract has none of the features of a charter-party. A charter-party is defined to be a contract by which an entire ship, or some principal part thereof, is let to a merchant for the conveyance of goods on a determined voyage to one or more places. (Abbott on Ship. 241.)

Now, by this agreement, the libellant has not hired the Yankee Blade, or any portion of the vessel; nor have the master or owners of the ship covenanted to convey any merchandise for the libellant, nor has he agreed to furnish them any. But the agent for the Yankee Blade "agrees that when the America arrives at Panama, the Yankee Blade shall leave New York, conveying passengers and freight," which were afterwards to be received by the America, and transported to San Francisco; and the passage money and freight earned was to be divided between them—25 per cent. to the Yankee Blade, and 75 to the America.

[ \* 92 ] \*This is nothing more than an agreement for a special and limited partnership in the business of transporting freight and passengers between New York and San Francisco, and the mere fact that the transportation is by sea, and not by land, will not be sufficient to give the court of admiralty jurisdiction of an action for a breach of the contract. It is not one of those to which the peculiar principles or remedies given by the maritime law have any special application, and is the fit subject for the jurisdiction of the common-law courts.

The decree of the circuit court is therefore affirmed.

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THE BRIG NEUREA.

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THE UNITED STATES v. THE BRIG NEUREA.

19 H. 92.

ADMIRALTY—THE DEGREE OF PARTICULARITY REQUIRED IN A LIBEL FOR FORFEITURE.

1. Where a libel of information charges the offense in the language of the statute, it is sufficient.
2. Therefore, when the charge is for carrying a number of passengers beyond that

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The United States v. The Brig Neurea.

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allowed by statute, it is not necessary to say on which deck of the vessel they were carried.

APPEAL from the district court for the northern district of California.

The case is sufficiently stated in the opinion. It arose on demurrer to the libel.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the United States.

\* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 94 ]

The Swedish brig Neurea was seized by the collector of customs at San Francisco, as forfeited to the United States under the passenger act of 1847. The record in this case exhibits the libel for information, filed on behalf of the United States, a demurrer thereto by the claimant, and a decree of the court below dismissing the libel. The appeal, therefore, brings under review the question of the sufficiency of the libel.

The claimant sets forth the following grounds of demurrer :

1. That the said libel states no sufficient cause of condemnation of said ship.

2. Because the said libel states no offense against the laws of the United States.

3. Because the said libel does not aver that the excess of passengers carried or imported on said ship were so carried or imported on the lower deck of said brig, or the orlop deck thereof.

4. Because the facts stated in said libel do not constitute a violation of the passenger act of the United States of 1847, or any other law of the United States.

The first, second, and fourth are but different forms of the same general assertion, " that the libel states no offense."

The third, which is more specific, objects to the libel for want of an averment that the passengers were carried on the lower deck.

An information for forfeiture of a vessel need not be more technical in its language, or specific in its description of the offense, than an indictment. As a general rule, an indictment for a statute offense is sufficient, if it describe the offense in the very words of the statute. The exceptions to this rule are, where the offenses created by statute are analogous to certain common-law felonies or misdemeanors, where the precedents require certain technical language, or where special averments are necessary in the description of the particular offense, in order that the defendant may afterwards protect himself under the plea of *autrefois acquit* or *convict*. (See on this subject *United States v. Gooding*, 12 Wheaton, 474.)



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The Brig Neurea.

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The offense created by the statute on which this libel is founded has no analogy to any particular common-law crime. If, therefore, the libel sets forth the offense in the words of [ \* 95 ] \* the statute which creates it, with sufficient certainty as to the time and place of its commission, it is all that is necessary to put the claimant on his defense.

The object of the act in question is the protection of the health and lives of passengers from becoming a prey to the avarice of ship owners. In order to test the sufficiency of the libel, it will be necessary to set forth at length the two sections under which it was framed.

The first section provides, that no master "shall take on board such vessel, at any foreign port or place, a greater number of passengers than in the following proportion to the space occupied by them and appropriated to their use, and unoccupied by stores or other goods not being the personal baggage of such passengers, that is to say, on the *lower deck or platform*, one passenger for every fourteen clear superficial feet of deck, if such vessel is not to pass within the tropics during such voyage; but if such vessel is to pass within the tropics during such voyage, then one passenger for every twenty such clear superficial feet of deck; and on the orlop deck, (if any,) one passenger for every thirty such superficial feet in all cases, with intent to bring such passengers into the United States of America, and shall leave such port, or place, with the same, and bring the same, or any number thereof, within the jurisdiction of the United States aforesaid, or if any such master of vessel shall take on board of his vessel, at any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States aforesaid, any greater number of passengers than the proportions aforesaid admit, with the intent to carry the same to any foreign port or place, every such master shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof before any circuit or district court of the United States aforesaid, shall, for each passenger taken on board beyond the above proportions, be fined in the sum of fifty dollars, and may also be imprisoned for any term not exceeding one year: *Provided*, That this act shall not be construed to permit any ship or vessel to carry more than two passengers to every five tons of such ship or vessel."

"Sec. 2. That if the passengers so taken on board such vessel, and brought into, or transported from, the United States aforesaid, shall exceed the number limited by the last section, to the *number of twenty in the whole*, such vessel shall be forfeited to the United States aforesaid, and be prosecuted and distributed as forfeitures are under the act to regulate duties on imports and tonnage."

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Seymour v. McCormick.

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Now, the libel conforms strictly to the requirements of this act.

It avers, that the master "took on board the Neurea at \* Hong Kong, in China, on the 1st of June, 1854, two [ \* 96 ] hundred and sixty-three passengers. That this was a greater number than in proportion to the space occupied by them, viz: "on the lower deck or platform" one passenger for every fourteen clear superficial feet, with intent to bring said passengers to the United States. That he afterwards, viz: on the 26th day of August, did bring them on said vessel to the port of San Francisco. That the passengers so taken on board and brought into the United States did exceed the number which could be lawfully taken, to the number of twenty in the whole, &c.

The act does not require an averment that the passengers "were carried or imported on the lower deck or the orlop deck."

The libel sets forth every averment of time, place, numbers, intention, and act, in the very words of the statute. It was not necessary to specify the precise measurement of the deck, or to show by a mathematical calculation its incapacity; nor to state the sex, age, color, or nation of the passengers; nor how many more than twenty their number exceeded the required area on deck. All these particulars were matters of evidence, which required no special averment of them to constitute a complete and technical description of the offense.

The decree of the district court is therefore reversed, and record remitted for further proceedings.

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**WILLIAM H. SEYMOUR and another, Plaintiffs in Error, v. CYRUS H. McCORMICK.**

19 H. 96.

PATENT LAW—McCORMICK REAPER.

1. Under the 9th section of the act of March 3, 1837, concerning a disclaimer of claims not valid by the patentee, it is a question for the court, and not for the jury, whether the disclaimer has been unreasonably delayed, so as to forfeit the claim of the patentee under other parts of patent that are valid.
2. If, however, such disclaimer is not made before the suit is brought, the patentee can have no costs, though he recover a judgment as to other claims in his patent. Costs in this case are therefore denied.
3. The second claim of McCormick, in his patent of 1845, namely, "I claim the reversed angle of the teeth of the blade, in manner described," is a distinct claim for the reversed angle of the teeth alone, and cannot be connected with other parts of the patent to make it valid.
4. The reading, on the trial, of the description of an invention from a publication, to

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show priority of invention, is evidence of nothing else but of the description of the thing in controversy, and is not evidence of the successful operation of the machine, though it states that it was successful.

5. Therefore the statement in such a work that a machine had been partially successful in 1828 and 1829, with the statement of a witness that it was used successfully in 1853, is not evidence from which the jury can infer that it was used successfully in the intermediate time, because there is no legal evidence that it was successful in 1828 or 1829.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the northern district of New York.

It is the same suit that was heard in this court at the December term, 1853, and reported in 16 How. 480; 21 Curtis, 267.

It is only necessary to say, in addition to what is found in the opinion of the court, that on the trial of the present case only the patent of 1845 was set up, and that no claim was made for infringement of the second and third claims of that patent, those claims only being brought to notice as affecting plaintiff's right to recover at all, or at least his right to recover for want of the disclaimer provided for in the 9th section of the act of March 3, 1837. 5 Stats. at Large, 194.

*Mr. Harding* and *Mr. Stanton*, for plaintiffs in error; also brief by *Mr. Selden*.

*Mr. Dickerson* and *Mr. Johnson*, for defendant.

[ \* 105 ] \* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the circuit court of the United States for the northern district of New York.

The suit was brought by McCormick against Seymour and Morgan, for the infringement of a patent for improvements in a reaping machine granted to the plaintiff on the 31st June, 1845. The improvements claimed to be infringed were—1st, a contrivance or combination of certain parts of the machinery described for dividing the cut from the uncut grain; and 2d, the arrangement of the reel-post in the manner described, so as to support the reel without interfering with the cutting instrument.

In the course of the trial, a question arose upon the true construction of the second claim in the patent, which is as follows: "I claim the reversed angle of the teeth of the blade in manner described." This claim was not one of the issues in controversy, as no allegation of infringement was set forth in the declaration.

But it was insisted, on the part of the defendants, that  
[ \* 106 ] the claim or improvement was not new, but had \* before been discovered and in public use, and that, under the

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ninth section of the act of congress passed March 3, 1837, the plaintiff was not entitled to recover cost, for want of a disclaimer of the claim before suit brought; and that, if he had unreasonably neglected or delayed making the disclaimer, he was not entitled to recover at all in the case.

The ground upon which the defendants insisted this claim was not new, was, that it claimed simply the reversed angle of the teeth of the blade or cutters. The court below were of opinion, that, reading the claim with reference to the specification in which the instrument was described, it was intended to claim the reversed angle of the teeth in connection with the spear-shaped fingers arranged for the purpose of securing the grain in the operation of the cutting—the novelty of which was not denied.

The majority of the court are of opinion, that this construction of the claim cannot be maintained, and that it is simply for the reversed angle of the cutters; and that there is error, therefore, in the judgment, in allowing the plaintiff costs.

In respect to the question of unreasonable delay in making the disclaimer, as going to the whole cause of action, the court are of opinion that the granting of the patent for this improvement, together with the opinion of the court below maintaining its validity, repel any inference of unreasonable delay in correcting the claim; and that, under the circumstances, the question is one of law. This was decided in the case of the Telegraph, (15 How. 121.) The chief justice, in delivering the opinion of the court, observed that “the delay in entering it (the disclaimer) is not unreasonable, for the objectionable claim was sanctioned by the head of the office; it has been held to be valid by a circuit court, and differences of opinion in relation to it are found to exist among the justices of this court. Under such circumstances, the patentee had a right to insist upon it, and not disclaim it until the highest court to which it could be carried had pronounced its judgment.”

Several other questions were raised in the case, which have been attentively considered by the court, and have been overruled, but which it cannot be important to notice at large, with one exception, which bears upon the fifteenth section of the patent act of 1836.

Bell's reaping machine was given in evidence, in pursuance of a notice under this section, with a view to disprove the novelty of one of the plaintiff's improvements; a description of it was read from “*Loudon's Encyclopædia of Agriculture*,” published in London, England, in 1831. In addition to the description of the machine, it appeared in the work that the \*reaper [\* 107] had been partially successful in September, 1828, and 1829.

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The Steamer St. Charles.

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It also appeared, from the evidence of Mr. Hussey, that he saw it in successful operation in the harvest of 1853.

The court was requested, on the trial, to instruct the jury, that from the facts that Bell's machine operated successfully in 1829 and in 1853, they were at liberty to infer that it had operated successfully in the intermediate period, which was refused. Without stating other grounds to justify the ruling, it is sufficient to say, that the only authority for admitting the book in evidence, is the fifteenth section of the act above mentioned. That section provides, that the defendant may plead the general issue, and give notice in writing, among other things, to defeat the patent, "that it (the improvement) had been described in some public work anterior to the supposed discovery thereof by the patentee." The work is no evidence of the facts relied on for the purpose of laying a foundation for the inference of the jury, sought be obtained.

The judgment of the court below is affirmed, with the qualification, that on the case being remitted to the court below, the taxation of costs be stricken from the record.

Mr. Justice GRIER dissented.

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THE STEAMER ST. CHARLES.

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E. G. ROGERS and others *v.* STEAMER ST. CHARLES and others.

19 H. 108.

ADMIRALTY—COLLISION OF STEAMBOAT AND SAIL VESSEL—ABSENCE OF LIGHT A FAULT.

1. A sail vessel lying at anchor should exhibit a light; and it is no excuse for not showing one at the time it was needed, that it had been taken down only for a few minutes to be cleaned. The schooner was in fault.
2. A steamer is also in fault for going at the rate of ten miles an hour of a dark night in Lake Borgne, when she ought to know that she is in the track of other vessels, and in a neighborhood where sailing vessels are accustomed to anchor in dark or stormy nights.
3. It is no sufficient legal excuse that the steamer carries the mail and is bound to make definite time in its delivery.
4. In such cases the damages resulting from collision must be equally divided.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and the facts are fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for appellants.

*Mr. Nelson*, for appellees.

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Rogers v. Steamer St. Charles.

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\* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 109 ]

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the eastern district of the State of Louisiana, sitting in admiralty.

The libel was filed in the district court to recover the value of a quantity of merchandise on board the schooner Ella, which was sunk in a collision with the steamer on Lake Borgne, some six or eight miles east of the light-ship in Pass Mary Ann, while at anchor on the night of the 5th February, 1853. The district court rendered a decree charging the steamer with the loss.

On an appeal, the circuit court reversed the decree, and dismissed the libel, on the ground that the schooner was in fault in not having a light in the fore-rigging, or in any other conspicuous place on the vessel, to give notice of her position to the approaching steamer.

The night was dark and rainy, and the wind blowing fresh from north-northwest. A proper light had been hung in the fore-rigging early in the evening, and kept there till near the \* time of the collision, which happened about half past [ \* 110 ] eleven o'clock. One of the hands had taken the lamp down to wipe off the water that had collected upon the glass globe, so that it might shine brighter. While he was standing midships, wiping the lamp, he heard the approach of the steamer, and immediately placed it on the top of the cook-house. The collision soon after occurred. The fault lies in removing the lamp for a moment from the fore-rigging to midships. If it was not practicable to wipe it in the rigging, another light should have been placed there on its removal. The time of the removal may be, as happened in this case, the instant when the presence of the light was most needed to give warning to the vessel approaching. All the hands examined who were on board the steamer deny that they saw any light at the time on the schooner.

We agree, therefore, with the court below, that the schooner was in fault.

But it is insisted, on the part of the appellants, that the steamer was also in fault on account of her rate of speed at the time, regard being had to the darkness of the night and the character of the channel she was navigating. The schooner, on coming out of the Pass Mary Ann, towards evening met a strong head wind and swell of the lake, and after pursuing her course some four or five miles, anchored under Cat Island. There were several other vessels at anchor at the time in that vicinity.

Some of the witnesses state that the place is used as a harbor for



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The Steamer St. Charles.

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schooners and other vessels navigating the lake in rough weather, as it is somewhat sheltered from the winds; and the number of vessels at anchor in the neighborhood, at the time of the collision, would seem to confirm this statement, and there is no evidence in the case to the contrary.

There is conflicting evidence on a point made by the appellant, that the steamer was out of the direct and usual course of steamers from Pass Mary Ann to Mobile. The weight of it is, that this course was a mile and a half or two miles north of the place where the schooner lay. But we do not attach much influence to this fact, as in the open lake there was no very fixed track of these vessels within the limit mentioned.

There is also some little discrepancy of the witnesses as to the darkness of the night. But the clear weight of it is, that at the time of the collision it was very dark and rainy, and the wind blowing fresh.

The witnesses on the part of the steamer are very explicit on this part of the case. The pilot says, the night was very dark and drizzling rain. The captain, that the night was [ \* 111 ] \* dark and cloudy, and the wind blowing briskly. The engineer, that the night was so dark, a vessel of the size of the schooner could not be seen at all till upon her, without a light; and yet he says there was nothing in the weather to prevent her running at her usual speed.

The steamer was going, at the time of the collision, at the rate of from nine to ten miles an hour. The pilot says, at her usual rate of speed, or at the rate of eight or nine knots. The engineer, not exceeding the usual rate of speed, which, it appears, averages about ten miles. The mate states, that the speed at the time was between ten and eleven miles.

Now, considering the darkness of the night and state of the weather, and that the steamer was navigating a channel where she was accustomed to meet sailing vessels engaged in the coasting trade between Mobile and New Orleans and the intermediate ports, we cannot resist the conclusion that the rate of speed above stated was too great for prudent and safe navigation; and this, whether we regard the security of the passengers on board of her, or the reasonable protection of other vessels navigating the same channel; and especially under the circumstances of this case, in which she was bound to know that the place where this schooner lay was a place to which vessels in rough and unpropitious weather, navigating this channel, were accustomed to resort for safety. The

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case presented is much stronger against the steamer than that of casually meeting the schooner in the open waters of the lake. She was at anchor with other vessels in an accustomed place of security and protection against adverse winds and weather, familiar to all persons engaged in navigating these waters. The place and weather, therefore, should have admonished the steamer to extreme care and caution, and it is, perhaps, not too much to say, should have led to the adoption of a course that would have avoided the locality altogether. The weight of the evidence is, even if she had pursued the most direct course from Pass Mary Ann to Mobile, it would have had this effect: she would have passed north of this cluster of vessels anchored under the shelter of the island.

Neither is it at all improbable, if the speed of the steamer had been slackened, and she had been moving at a reduced rate, with the care and caution required by the state of the weather, that she would have seen the light on the schooner in time to have avoided her. The proof is full that there was a light on board from the time she cast anchor till the happening of the disaster. But, at the critical moment, it was in the hand of the seaman at midships, instead of at a conspicuous place in the rigging. The light must have been in some \*degree visible, as all the [ \* 112 ] sails of the vessel were furled, and was placed on the top of the cook-house as soon as the wet and moisture were wiped from the glass.

The admiralty in England have repeatedly condemned vessels holding a rate of speed in a dark night, under circumstances like the present, and so did this court in the case of the Steamer New Jersey, (10 How. 568.) The Rose, 2 Wm. Rob. 1; The Virgil, Ib. 201.

It has been urged, on behalf of the steamer, that she carried the mail, and that a given rate of speed was necessary in order to fulfill her contract with the government.

This defense has been urged in similar and analogous cases in England, but has been disregarded, and indeed must be, unless we regard the interest and convenience of the arrival of an early mail more important than the reasonable protection of the lives and property of our citizens.

Having arrived at the conclusion that the steamer was in fault, the case is one for the apportionment of the loss.

The decree must therefore be reversed, and the case remitted to the court below, for the purpose of carrying this apportionment into effect.

Coiron v. Millaudon.

POOLEY, NICOLL & Co. }  
                                   v. }  
 THE STEAMER ST. CHARLES. }

The decree of the court below is reversed, for the reasons given in the case of *E. G. Rogers & Co. v. the same steamer*, and remitted to the court for an apportionment of the loss.

BROOKS & RANDOLPH }  
                                   v. }  
 THE STEAMER ST. CHARLES. }

The appeal in this case is dismissed for want of jurisdiction; the decree in the court below being for a sum less than \$2,000.

JOHN HURLEY & Co. }  
                                   v. }  
 THE STEAMER ST. CHARLES. }

The appeal is dismissed for want of jurisdiction; the decree of the court below being for a sum less than \$2,000.

PIERRE FELIX COIRON and another, Appellants, v. LAURENT MILLAUDON and others.

19 H. 113.

## PARTIES IN CHANCERY—ACT OF 1839.

1. In a bill to set aside a judicial sale of real estate, a mortgagee who had received the proceeds of the sale on account of his mortgage is a necessary party, because he is interested to uphold the sale.
2. The fact that the suit is brought in a federal court, and such mortgagee is not within its jurisdiction, does not enable the court to proceed without him.
3. Neither the act of congress of 1839 (5 Stats. at Large, 321) nor the 47th rule of this court authorizes a circuit court to make a decree in the absence of a party whose rights must necessarily be affected by it.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and the case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Hunt and Mr. Ogden*, for appellants.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for appellees.

[ \* 114 ] \*Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from a decree of the district judge, sitting in the circuit court of the United States for the eastern district of Louisiana.

The bill was filed in the court below, by two of the heirs of J. J. Coiron, against Alexander Lesseps, Laurent Millaudon, and

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others, to set aside a sale of a plantation and slaves to the two defendants named, in 1834, in pursuance of proceedings in a case of insolvency before a parish court in the city of New Orleans.

The father of the complainants, having become insolvent in 1833, applied to the court for liberty to surrender his property for the benefit of his creditors, and that in the meantime all proceedings against his person or property might be stayed, which application was granted, and the surrender of his property accepted.

Theodore Nicolet was appointed syndic of the creditors, and such proceedings were had, that a sale of the plantation and slaves was directed in March, 1834, when the two defendants became the purchasers. The inventory of the debts of the insolvent, which accompanied his application to the parish court, exceeded \$177,000, and of his assets, \$137,000. The assets sold for some \$77,000; and after satisfying the charges and expenses of the proceedings, the balance was distributed among the creditors under the direction of the court. This amount, some \$60,000, fell short of satisfying the claims of the two principal creditors, Van Brugh Livingston, and Harriet, his wife, of New York, and the firm of Nicolet & Co., of New Orleans, which were secured upon the estate by mortgages.

The object of this suit is to set aside the sale on the ground of irregularities in the insolvent proceedings, which are set forth in detail in the bill.

The court below, after hearing the case upon the pleadings and proofs, decreed against the complainants and dismissed the bill.

The record is quite voluminous, but we have stated enough \*of the facts to present the questions upon which [\* 115] we shall dispose of the case.

According to the law of Louisiana, on a surrender by the insolvent of his property for the benefit of creditors, the estate vests in the latter *sub modo*, and is disposed of by them through the agency of the syndic, under the supervision and control of the court before whom the proceedings take place. 2 Rob. R. 193, 194.

They appoint the syndic and fix the terms and conditions of the sale, and have the charge of the estate in the meantime between the surrender and final disposition.

The creditors, therefore, are the parties chiefly concerned in these proceedings; and as it respects those to whom the proceeds of the estate have been distributed, they are directly interested in upholding the sale, for, if it is set aside, and the proceedings declared a nullity, they would be liable to refund the share of the purchase money each one had received in the distribution.

A court of equity, in setting aside a deed of a purchaser upon

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grounds other than positive fraud on his part, sets it aside upon terms, and requires a return of the purchase money, or that the conveyance stand as a security for its payment. 1 J. Ch. R. 478; 4 J. R. 536, 598, 599.

This constitutes the essential difference between relief in equity and that afforded in a court of law. A court of law can hold no middle course. The entire claim of each party must rest, and be determined at law, on the single point of the validity of the deed; but it is the ordinary case in the former court, that a deed not absolutely void, yet, under the circumstances, inequitable as between the parties, may be set aside upon terms.

Nicolet & Co., and Van Brugh Livingston and wife, the mortgage creditors, or their legal representatives, were therefore necessary parties to the bill, as any decree made in the case disturbing the sale may seriously affect their interests.

This objection has been anticipated in the bill, and an averment made that these parties were out of the jurisdiction of the court. But it is well settled, that neither the act of congress of 1839, (5 U. S. Stats. at Large, 321, sec. 1,) nor the 47th rule of this court, enables the circuit court to make a decree in a suit in the absence of a party whose rights must necessarily be affected by such a decree, and that the objection may be taken at any time upon the hearing, or in the appellate court. 17 How. 130; 1 Peters, 299.

We think the decision of the court below was right in dismissing the bill, and therefore affirm the decree.

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REUBEN L. LONG and others, Appellants, v. JOHN O'FALLON.

19 H. 116.

STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS—SALE BY AN ADMINISTRATOR.

1. A purchase of real estate from an administrator, and possession for over twenty years, sustains a plea of the statute of limitations concerning real estate in Missouri, in the absence of any special circumstance to except it from the bar.
2. The administrator having received from a debtor of the estate a mortgage to secure the debt, and after forfeiture a release of the equity of redemption, can convey a valid title to a *bona fide* purchaser, and the latter is not bound to see to the application of the purchase money.
3. The heirs of the decedent may go upon the administrator or his sureties for a *devastavit*, if he has failed to account for the purchase money; but they cannot recover the land.
4. The same rule applies where the administrator had entered land and received patent from the United States, as part of the same transaction securing the debt, the patent being in his own name, and the purchaser receiving a deed from him for which he paid value.

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THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the district of Missouri, and the case is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Glover*, for appellants.

*Mr. Geyer*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 124 ]

The appellants, a part of the heirs of Gabriel Long, deceased, instituted this suit in the circuit court against the defendant, to obtain a decree for a title to, and for an account for the rents and profits of, a parcel of land in St. Louis, Missouri.

The case made in the record is, that in 1820, Alexander McNair and wife executed a mortgage deed for the land in controversy to Gabriel Long, to secure a debt not then due. Before its payment, Long died, and Alexander McAllister was appointed to administer his estate. In 1823, this administrator obtained a decree in the circuit court of St. Louis county, for a foreclosure of the mortgage, and an order of sale, to be executed after a limited period. This order was executed in August, 1824, by a public sale of the property to McAllister, for a small portion of the debt.

The title of McNair before this sale had entirely failed. The Spanish concession and survey, under which he claimed the land, had been surveyed and located by the officers of the land office so as to exclude this parcel, and, in consequence, it was subdivided into five fractional sections, and was subject to sale as public land. At the date of the sale by the sheriff, two of these fractions, embracing the whole tract except nine acres, were claimed by Catherine Dodge, under a patent from the United States, and the remaining sections were patented to McAllister, as a purchaser, by entry at the land office in 1828.

In September, 1822, Catherine Dodge and McNair agreed to secure the debt due to the estate of Long, by a mortgage in favor of McAllister.

The debt was divided into three unequal installments, which were to be paid within three years by McNair; and Mrs. Dodge conveyed her two fractional sections, in mortgage, with a power of sale in the event of a default, to secure the performance of the obligation.

McNair failed to make the payments, and in 1828 Mrs. Dodge released to McAllister her equity of redemption and her claim upon him for any surplus from the mortgage, for the consideration of one dollar.

In 1828, the defendant purchased the five fractional sections \*from McAllister, for a fair price, and has been in [ \* 125 ]



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the undisputed possession of the land since 1830. The defendant pleads the statute of limitations in bar of the recovery.

The opinion of the court is, that the conveyances of Mrs. Dodge to McAllister did not invest the heirs of Gabriel Long with an equitable estate, or a particular lien on the property described in them. Their primary object was to create a security, or a fund, for the payment of the debt of McNair, and to enable McAllister to dispose of the land in case of its non-payment, at his discretion, for its discharge. The release executed in 1828 was not made to extinguish any portion of the debt, nor did it remove the obligation of McAllister to convert the security into pecuniary assets. His sale of the land was a legitimate exercise of the powers of an administrator and trustee, and his vendee was not obliged to look to the application of the purchase money. (*Tyrrell v. Morris*, Dev. and Batt. Ch. R. 559.) His failure to account was a *devastavit*, for which he and his sureties are liable on their official bond at law; and probably, if the land had been retained by him, or any person claiming as a volunteer under him, a court of equity might have permitted the heirs to accept the property, instead of the debt due to the estate. But, in the present instance, the defendant is a purchaser in good faith, and is entitled to hold the property, exempt from the claims of the plaintiffs. (*Rayner v. Pearsall*, 3 John. Ch. R. 578.)

Nor can the title of the defendant to the three small fractional sections entered by McAllister at the land office, and which were purchased from him by the defendant after his patent from the United States had been issued, be successfully questioned by the plaintiffs. The estate conveyed to Long by McNair, in mortgage, was known to be without value in 1824. McAllister did not acquire by the sheriff's deed any interest in the land, or profit from his purchase. The land was then a part of the public domain, and subject to entry at the land office, under the laws of the United States. Without considering whether there was any relation between this administrator and these heirs, which precluded the former to purchase the land for his own account, under the principles of equity, we are satisfied that the heirs are not entitled to pursue their claim against a purchaser for value, who has not been guilty of fraud or collusion.

The facts necessary to sustain the plea of the statute of limitations are proved on the part of the defendant, and no charge in the bill discloses a case of exception from its operation. (*Piatt v. Vattier and others*, 9 Pet. 405.)

Decree of the circuit court affirmed.

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**ROMELIUS L. BAKER and others, Trustees of the Harmony Society,  
Appellants, v. JOSHUA NACHTRIEB.**

19 H. 126.

**COMMUNIST SOCIETIES—RECEIPT FOR MONEY TREATED AS A CONTRACT.**

1. Plaintiff, who was a member of the communist "Harmony Society," withdrew, and sued for a share of the common property.
2. The laws of the association concerning property cited and considered. One of these allows the association, in its discretion, to make a donation to a member voluntarily withdrawing.
3. A receipt given by plaintiff, stating his withdrawal, and acknowledging the receipt of two hundred dollars as a donation, agreeably to the above contract, is not only a receipt, but a contract of dissolution, expressing the terms on which it was made.
4. As there is nothing in the bill assailing its fairness, or impeaching it in any way, it is conclusive against the plaintiff's right to relief in the present case.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the western district of Pennsylvania, and the case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Stanbery and Mr. Loomis*, for appellants.

*Mr. Stanton*, for appellee.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

The appellee, who describes himself as a member in the common and joint stock association for mutual benefit and advantage, and for the mutual acquisition and enjoyment of property, called the "Harmony Society," filed a bill in the circuit court against the appellants, as the trustees and managers of its business and estate. The object of the bill is to obtain for the plaintiff a decree for an account of the share to which he is entitled in the property of the society, or compensation for his labor and service during the time he was a member.

In 1819 he became associated with George Rapp and others, in the Harmony Society in Indiana, and remained with them there, or at Economy, in Beaver county, Pennsylvania, till 1846. He devoted his time, skill, attention, and care, during that period, to the increase of the wealth and the promotion of the interest of the society.

\*These facts are admitted in the pleadings of either [\*127] party.

The bill avers, that in 1846, the plaintiff being then forty-eight years old, and worn out with years and labor for said association, was wrongfully and unjustly excluded from it, and deprived of any share in its property, benefits, or advantages, by the combination and covin of George Rapp and his associates; that at the time of his

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exclusion he was entitled to a large sum of money, which those persons unjustly and illegally appropriated to their own use; that George Rapp was the leader and trustee of the association, invested with the title to its property; and that, since his death, the defendants have acquired the control and management of its business and affairs, and the possession of its effects. The plaintiff calls for the production of the articles of association, which from time to time have regulated this society, and prays for an account and distribution of its property, or a compensation for his labor.

The defendants produce a series of articles, by which the association has been governed since its organization in 1805.

They admit, that from small beginnings the society have become independent in their circumstances, being the owners of lands ample for the supply of their subsistence, warm and comfortable houses for the members, and engines and machinery to diminish and cheapen their labors. They affirm that the plaintiff participated in all the individual, social, and religious benefits which were enjoyed by his fellows, under their contract, until he became possessed by a spirit of discontent and disaffection, a short time before his membership terminated. They deny that the plaintiff was wrongfully excluded from the association, or deprived of a share or participation in the property and effects, by the combination or covin of George Rapp and his associates; but assert, that voluntarily, and of his own accord, he separated himself from the society. They deny that he had a title to any compensation for labor and service while he was a member, other than that which was expended for his support, maintenance, and instruction, and that which he derived during the time from the spiritual and social advantages he enjoyed. To support this averment, they epitomize the history of the Harmony Society, and the agreements which, from time to time, have been the basis of its organization.

The society was composed at first of Germans, who emigrated to the United States in 1805, under the leadership of George Rapp. The members were associated and combined by the common belief that the government of the patriarchal age, united to the community of property, adopted in the days of the Apostles, [ \* 128 ] would conduce to promote their temporal and \*eternal happiness. The founders of the society surrendered all their property to the association, for the common benefit. The society was settled originally in Pennsylvania, was removed in 1814 and 1815 to Indiana, and again in 1825 to Economy, in Pennsylvania.

The organic law of the society in regard to their property, is

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contained in two sections of the articles of association, adopted in 1827 by the associates, of whom the plaintiff was one. They are as follows: "All the property of the society, real, personal, and mixed, in law or equity, and howsoever contributed and acquired, shall be deemed, now and forever, joint and indivisible stock; each individual is to be considered to have finally and irrevocably parted with all his former contributions, whether in land, goods, money, or labor, and the same rule shall apply to all future contributions, whatever they may be.

"Should any individual withdraw from the society, or depart this life, neither he, in the one case, nor his representatives, in the latter, shall be entitled to demand an account of said contributions, whether in land, goods, money, or labor; or to claim anything from the society as matter of right. But it shall be left altogether to the discretion of the superintendent to decide whether any, and, if any, what allowance shall be made to such member, or his representatives, as a donation."

The defendants, admitting, as we have seen, that the plaintiff, until 1846, was a contented member of the association, answer and say, that during that year he became disaffected; used violent threats against the associates; made repeated declarations of his intentions to leave the society, and in that year fulfilled his design by a voluntary withdrawal and separation from the society, receiving at the same time from George Rapp two hundred dollars as a donation. They exhibit, as a part of the answer, a writing, signed by the plaintiff, to the following effect:

"To-day I have withdrawn myself from the Harmony Society, and ceased to be a member thereof; I have also received of George Rapp two hundred dollars as a donation, agreeably to contract.

"JOSHUA NACHTRIEB.

"ECONOMY, *June 18, 1846.*"

This statement of the pleadings shows that no issue was made in them upon the merits of the doctrines, social or religious, which form the basis of this association; nor any question in reference to the religious instruction and ministration, or the domestic economy or physical discipline which their leader and the other managers have adopted and enforced. \* Nor do they [\* 129] suggest any inquiry into the condition of the members, and whether they have experienced hardship, oppression, or undue mortification, from the ambition, avarice, or fanaticism, of their guides and administrators.

The bill depends on the averments, that the plaintiff approved

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the constitution of the society ; submitted to its government ; obeyed its regulations, and prized the advantage of being a member. The burden of his complaint is, that he was wrongfully, and without any fault or consent on his part, deprived of his station through the combination of the leader and his assistants. And the defendants concede the character the plaintiff claims for himself; they concede that the plaintiff was an approved and blameless member of the association, and was entitled to whatever its constitution and order provided for the temporal good or the eternal felicity of the members, and assert that he enjoyed them until he became disaffected and repining, and finally surrendered to a spirit of discontent, which moved him to abandon his condition and privileges. As an evidence of this, they produce a writing, signed by him, in which he acknowledges a voluntary secession from the society, and claims that the case has arisen to authorize him to make an appeal to the bounty of the superintendent, and that the superintendent has answered that appeal by a donation. The value of this writing is now to be considered. The power of the superintendent to subtract from the otherwise "joint and indivisible stock" of the society a portion for the individual use of a seceding member, depends upon the concession that the member has withdrawn voluntarily. He cannot supply one who is the victim of covin or combination. The evidence shows that the mind of the plaintiff, in June, 1846, was disquieted in consequence of his connection with the association, and that he contemplated a change in his condition ; that he made inquiries upon the expediency of a removal from Economy, and made some preparations for his departure ; that the leader of the society, suspecting his discontent, and discovering some deviation by him from the rules of the society, rebuked him with harshness, and menaced him with a sentence of expulsion. Some of the witnesses testify to such a sentence, while the testimony of others reduces the expressions to an admonition and menace. But two days after the occurrence of the last of these scenes, and before any removal had taken place, the writing in the record was executed by him, embodying his decision to leave the society, and to accept the bounty the constitution permitted the superintendent to bestow. This writing would have much probative force, if we were simply to treat it as an admission of the state-  
[ \* 130 ] ments it contains, when \* considered in connection with other evidence in the record. But, we think, this writing is something more than an admission, and stands in a different light from an ordinary receipt. The writing must be treated as the contract of dissolution, between the plaintiff and the society,

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of their mutual obligations and engagements to each other. No evidence of prior declarations or antecedent conduct is admissible to contradict or to vary it.

It was prepared to preserve the remembrance of what the parties had prescribed to themselves to do, and expresses their intention in their own language; and that such was its object, is corroborated by the fact that for three years there is no evidence of a contrary sentiment. Treating this writing as an instrument of evidence of this class, it is clear that the bill has not made a case in which its validity can be impeached. To enable the plaintiff to show that the rule of the leader, (Rapp,) instead of being patriarchal, was austere, oppressive, or tyrannical; his discipline vexatious and cruel; his instructions fanatical, and, upon occasions, impious; his system repugnant to public order, and the domestic happiness of its members; his management of their revenues and estate rapacious, selfish, or dishonest; and that the condition of his subjects was servile, ignorant, and degraded, so that none of them were responsible for their contracts or engagements to him, from a defect of capacity and freedom, as has been attempted by him in the testimony collected in this cause, it was a necessary prerequisite that his bill should have been so framed as to exhibit such aspects of the internal arrangements and social and religious economy of the association. This was not done; and for this cause the evidence cannot be considered. The authorities cited from the decisions of this court are decisive. *Very v. Very*, 13 How. 361, 345; *Patton v. Taylor*, 7 How. 157; *Crockett v. Lee*, 7 Wheat. 525.

Decree reversed. Bill dismissed.

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**JAMES MEEGAN, Plaintiff in Error, v. JEREMIAH T. BOYLE.**

19 H. 130.

**CONVEYANCE BY MARRIED WOMEN—ANCIENT DEEDS—LIMITATION.**

1. The deed of a married woman, not signed by her, or acknowledged as the law requires, is not valid, though her name, with her husband's, is attached to the deed, there being no evidence to show it to be her act.
2. Nor can a certified copy of the deed, though recorded, be received as evidence where the original is incompetent.
3. So a will never proved or admitted to record, under which nothing was ever done or performed for a great many years, the execution of which is not proved to the court, cannot now be received in evidence to defeat the title claimed under the heirs of the supposed testator.



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4. Neither such deeds nor such a will can be received as ancient instruments, under presumptions in their favor, because they are not valid on their face, and because the circumstances of the present case do not justify it.
5. The statute of limitations of Missouri does not run against a married woman during coverture, and she has an action of ejectment twenty years after discoverture to assert her title.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Missouri.

The facts are fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Geyer*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Williams* and *Mr. Crittenden*, for defendant.

[ \* 143 ] \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This writ of error brings before us the judgment of the circuit court for the district of Missouri.

[ \* 144 ] \* Boyle brought an action of trespass and ejectment in the circuit court for a common field lot, in what was formerly known as the Big Prairie, of St. Louis, containing one arpent in front, on Broadway, in the city aforesaid, by the depth of forty arpents, running westwardly, being the same lot of land granted by the Spanish government to Moreau, and confirmed to his representatives by the United States, and known as survey 1,480.

The defendant pleaded not guilty. A verdict of guilty was found against him for an undivided two-fifths of the land described.

A grant of the land claimed under the Spanish government was proved to have been made to Francis Moreau, who occupied the land some time before his death, which took place in 1802. He left seven children surviving him—three sons and four daughters. His sons were named Joseph, Alexis, and Louis; his daughters, Manette, widow of one Cadeau, and afterwards wife of Louis Collin; Marie Louise, wife of Joseph Menard; Helen, who afterwards intermarried with Pierre Cerré; and Angelique, who intermarried with Notaine Mallette.

The plaintiff gave in evidence a sheriff's deed, dated the 24th of February, 1853, which recites a judgment in favor of David Clary and William Waddingham, against Angelique Mallette, Pierre Willemin, and Melanie Cerré, his wife, Felix Pingal and Josephine Cerré, his wife, by her guardian, for \$455.31, on which an execution was issued, and levied on the defendant's land, designated as survey 1,480, and the same was sold the 19th of February, 1853, to the plaintiff, Boyle, to whom the above deed was given, which purports to convey all the right and interest of the defendants.

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The plaintiff proved that defendant had been in possession of the premises since 1839.

On the part of the defendant it was proved that, in the summer of 1820, John Mullanphy built a small brick house, which stands partly on the premises sued for, and partly on one of the common field lots confirmed to Vien. Soon after the house was built, Mullanphy fenced three or four acres of ground, including the house. In 1822 or 1823, he inclosed fifteen or twenty acres, and in 1825 or 1836, John O'Fallon, the executor of Mullanphy, induced Waddingham to inclose all the land claimed by the estate of Mullanphy in that neighborhood, which included the land sued for. The house and inclosures were rented to different persons from time to time, and were occupied with occasional intervals, sometimes of several months. In 1846 or 1847, Waddingham's fence fell down, and the tract \*lay vacant and uninclosed for [\* 145] a year or two, when portions of it were inclosed by the heirs of Mullanphy.

At the trial a paper was offered in evidence, purporting to be the deed of Joseph Moreau and others, heirs of Francis Moreau, deceased, dated the 3d of September, 1818, conveying to Pierre Chouteau all their estate and interest in the tract of land in the declaration described. A certificate of Thomas R. Musick, a justice of the peace, certifying that Joseph Menard and wife, Joseph Ortiz and his wife, signed the instrument, and acknowledged it to be their deed. There was also offered an instrument purporting to be a deed of Pierre Reaume and Marceline, his wife, and of Joseph Menard and Marie Louise Moreau, dated 6th November, 1819, conveying to Pierre Chouteau their interest in the land conveyed by their co-heirs, by the foregoing deed. Also, there was offered a certificate of Raphael Widen, notary public, of the acknowledgment of this instrument, the 6th November, 1819; and also a certificate that both the instruments were recorded 6th June, 1822.

It was proved that the above papers, after the death of John Mullanphy, came into the possession of John O'Fallon, having been found among the papers of the deceased.

The signatures to the first instrument were affixed by marks, the names being in the handwriting of F. M. Guyol and others.

Certain persons swore that they heard several of the heirs say they had sold their land to Pierre Chouteau. That Joseph Moreau lived in Louisiana in a destitute condition, where he died; and that he was never heard to claim any land in St. Louis, and, in fact, that he said he had sold his land in Missouri.

Pierre Chouteau and wife, on the 30th October, 1819, conveyed

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the tract in controversy to John Mullanphy by deed, which was duly acknowledged and recorded.

On the above evidence, the two deeds in 1818 and 1819 were offered in evidence, to which the plaintiff objected, "because the first deed was not signed or acknowledged by Marie Collin, Angelique Mallette, and Helen Cerré, under whom he claims, and that it did not convey any title of the *femes covert*."

The defendant then offered in evidence a copy of the will of François Moreau, certified by S. D. Barlow, recorder, to have been taken from among the archives of the French and Spanish governments, deposited in his office, and filed for record on the 17th August, 1846, being archive 2,257. If the recorder had power to certify as to the deposit of the will, it does not appear by whom it was made, nor at what time.

[ \* 146 ] \* This instrument states that in the year 1798, on the 2d August, we, Louis Collin, in default of a notary, went to the home of St. Francis Dunegant, captain commandant of St. Ferdinand, of Florissant, assisted by Antoine Rivierre and five others named; where St. François Moreau went with Joseph Moreau at my residence; the said Francis Dunegant and the said François Moreau declared and requested to make his last will, which he pronounced to us in a loud and intelligible voice, as follows, &c.: "Among other provisions, the testator names his son Joseph universal legatee, and afterwards declares it is with the reserve, that he shall reimburse to each of his brothers and sisters \$27 silver out of the estate of their deceased mother, and it is declared that Joseph Moreau obliges himself to furnish certain articles annually to his father during his life." The testimonium is as follows: Done and passed at St. Ferdinand, in Florissant, the day and year aforesaid, and signed (after being read) before Don Francis Dunegant, captain commanding, and the aforesaid witnesses; the said Francis Moreau made his ordinary mark, &c.

At the time of offering the will, the following deeds and documents were read in evidence, as bearing upon said will, and its admissibility in evidence: a deed dated 2d April, 1818, from Joseph Moreau and others, for a lot on Third street, town of St. Louis. In the deed it is stated that Joseph Menard, Aurora, the wife of Joseph Hortiz, are children of — Moreau, *alias* Menard, deceased. Also, the inventory and account of sales of the estate of Francis Moreau, the inventory of the community property of Francis Moreau and wife, under the direction of Francis Dunegant, commandant, &c.

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On the foregoing testimony, the defendant moved the court to instruct the jury as follows:

1. If the jury find that Francis Moreau, in his lifetime, was the owner of the lot in controversy; that he died prior to 1804, and that his two daughters, Mrs. Mallette and Mrs. Cerré, took their husbands prior to 1804, then the several interests of said daughters in said lot became upon their marriage, and was their paraphernal property.

2. If the jury find, as mentioned in instruction No. 1, and further find, that in the year 1818, Mallette and Pierre Cerré, husbands of said daughters, made the deed read in evidence by the defendants, then, under the evidence in this cause, the jury may presume that said daughters gave the administration of said paraphernal property to their husbands, and that the same was alienated with their consent.

3. If the jury find, as mentioned in instruction No. 1, and further find, that defendants, and those under whom they \* claim have had open and continued possession of the lot [ \* 147 ] in question for thirty years and more, before the beginning of this suit, claiming to own the same, then the plaintiff cannot recover any interest in said lot, derived by Mrs. Mallette or Mrs. Cerré from their said father.

4. If Mrs. Pingal was dead, leaving a child, at the time of the sheriff's sale, under which plaintiff claims, and during all the time of the coverture of said Mrs. Pingal the lot in controversy was in possession of defendants, and those under whom they claim, holding the same adversely to Mrs. Pingal and her husband, and there never was any entry upon the part of the wife or husband, then the plaintiff derived no title to the lot in controversy under Mrs. Pingal or her husband.

The court gave the first instruction, and refused the others, to which refusal exception was taken.

It is argued that the deed of the heirs of Moreau to Chouteau, dated September 3, 1818, and that offered as the act of Pierre Reaume and wife, dated 6th November, 1819, ought to have been admitted in evidence; that the execution of the last-mentioned deed was fully proved by proof of the death of the subscribing witnesses and their handwriting.

Some of the grantors in this deed acknowledged the execution of it before Thomas R. Musick, a justice of the peace, but there was no proof that Angelique or Helen Cerré, or Marie Collin, had signed or acknowledged the deed, and these were the heirs under which the plaintiff claims. It was proved by Colonel O'Fallon, that he

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was the executor of John Mullanphy, and that in 1833 he received from the son of the deceased the title papers of the estate, among which was the above original deed, with certain indorsements. And it was proved that the deed was in the handwriting of Guyol, a justice of the peace, with whose handwriting he was well acquainted. It was also proved that the signatures, Antoine Mallette, Pierre Cerré, and Joseph Moreau, were in the handwriting of Guyol, and that of Marie Collin in the handwriting of her husband, Louis Collin; the signature, Ellen Moreau, the wife of Pierre Cerré, is in the handwriting of Hawley. Guyol, the witness states, was a man of good character. There was some proof that Pierre Cerré and Antoine Mallette, after the date of said paper, stated often that they had sold their land to Pierre Chouteau, sen.; but there appears to be no proof that Angelique Mallette, or Helen Cerré, or Marie Collin, had ever stated or admitted that they had parted with their interest in the land.

One of the defendant's witnesses stated that Joseph Moreau said, that, after the decease of his father, he set up a claim to [ \* 148 ] \* the succession, and that he was imprisoned for doing so, and that Pierre Chouteau had him released. Some evidence was given as to the deed having been deposited in the recorder's office for record, and an indorsement that it was to be handed to Mullanphy.

The common law was adopted in the Missouri Territory in 1816, and consequently it governs all subsequent legal transactions.

The children of Moreau, being seven at the time of his decease, were reduced, by the death of Louis, intestate, and Marie, who also died intestate, to five. And it seems that the plaintiff derived his title from two of the surviving daughters, Angelique and Helen, and their heirs; he therefore claims under Louis, Marie, Helen, and Angelique. It seems not to be contested that the property vested in the daughters, under the civil law, was paraphernal. A succession accruing to the wife during marriage is her paraphernal property, which she may administer without the consent or control of her husband. (*O'Conner v. B rre*, 3 Martin Lou. Rep. 455.) The wife may give the control of this property, in writing, to her husband. (1 White's New Recopilacion, 56, note 33.)

The circuit court committed no error in excluding from the jury the above deed. The execution of it, by the parties under whom the plaintiff claims, is not proved, nor do the facts relied on, from which a presumption is attempted to be drawn in favor of its validity, authorize such presumption. The *femes covert* were under disabilities. They could only divest themselves of their rights in the

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mode specially authorized. Their husbands had no power, without their concurrence and action, to convey their real estate.

The defendant offered to read a certified copy of the deed, to show its condition at the time it was recorded, but the court refused to permit such copy to be read. If the original deed was not evidence, it is difficult to perceive for what legal purpose a recorded copy of it could be read. There was no error in this ruling by the court.

There was no evidence that the will had been proved, or that the conditions stated in it had been complied with.

A deed dated 2d April, 1813, from Joseph Moreau and his brothers and sisters, conveyed to Hempstead and Farrar a lot which would have passed by the supposed will to Joseph Moreau, had it been operative. Also, there was shown a sale bill of the personal property of the estate on the 19th of April, 1803, Joseph Moreau being present, and that he purchased a part of the property devised to him by the will.

Also, it was shown that an administrator was duly appointed \*on the estate of Francis Moreau, and his estate [\*149] was administered in the same manner as if he had died intestate.

By the Spanish law, a will was required to be proved by the attesting witnesses within one month after the decease of the testator; and, when proved, it is required to be recorded. (1 White's Recopilacion, 111; 2 Moreau and Carleton's Partidas, 975-'6-'7.) The testator cannot disinherit a child without naming the child, and the reasons for doing so. (1 White's Re. 107.) No heir can claim a devise, without performing the condition annexed to it. (1 White's Re. 103.) It is required that he shall appear before the judge, and either accept or reject the devise. (1 White's Re. 111, 127.) None of these requisites were performed by Joseph Moreau, who was made, by the will, universal heir.

If the will was a genuine instrument, and Joseph was the universal heir, it could not have remained dormant, it would seem, for fifty years, or in the archives, without being brought to the light, and having on it some judicial action. But whether it be a genuine instrument or not, it has not been treated as valid, as no claim has been set up under it, and all the heirs have acted, in regard to the estate of their father, as though he had died intestate.

Neither the deed to Chouteau, nor the will, can be admitted in evidence, without proof, as an ancient instrument. The rule embraces no instrument which is not valid upon its face, and which does not contain every essential requirement of the law under which it was made. Neither the deed nor the will comes within the rule,



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and we think the court very properly excluded them both from the jury.

In regard to the second, third, and fourth instructions, which the court refused to give to the jury, there was no error.

As early as December 17, 1818, the territorial legislature passed an act limiting real actions, which remains in force. The act abolished all the rules of prescription under the Spanish law, and substituted a limitation of twenty years after action accrued, and, in case of disability by coverture, twenty years after it ceased. In 1820, it appears Mullanphy took possession of a part of the premises in controversy, and from that time retained possession. Some of the husbands had a life estate in the lands; but whether this was so or not is immaterial, as there is no bar to the claim of the plaintiff by the statute of limitations.

By an act "prescribing the time for commencing actions," approved March 10, 1835, (Revised Code, 396,) it is declared, in the 11th section, that "the provisions of this act shall not apply to any action commenced, nor to any cause where the [ \* 150 ] \* right of action or entry shall have accrued, before the time when this act takes effect, but the same shall remain subject to the laws now in force."

It will be observed, that the limitation act of 1818, being still in force, cannot operate on any of the *femes covert* of whom the plaintiff claims. It did not begin to run against them until they become discover, from which time it required twenty years to bar their right. Under such circumstances, no presumption can arise against them, as they had no power to prosecute any one who entered upon their land. No laches can be charged against them until discover, and there is no ground to say that either the statute or lapse of time, since that period, can affect the rights of the plaintiff, or of those under whom he claims. The court, therefore, did not err in refusing to give to the jury the instructions requested.

Upon the whole, the judgment of the circuit court is affirmed, with costs.

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Post v. Jones.

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WILLIAM E. POST and others, Appellants, v. JOHN H. JONES and others.

19 H. 150.

ADMIRALTY—MASTER'S RIGHT TO SELL—SALVAGE.

1. It is undoubtedly true that a master has the right, under extraordinary circumstances, to sell the vessel and the cargo; but the circumstances under which the sale is made are always open to a rigid scrutiny.
2. In all cases where such sale has been held valid, there is implied a market for the article sold, a chance for competition, and money to pay for the thing sold. Hence a sale on a bleak coast of Behring's Straits, with no competition, and no money actually paid, the purchasers bidding a nominal price instead of becoming salvors, is void.
3. But as the vessel and cargo were derelict, and lost but for the aid of the salvors, they shall be allowed reasonable salvage.
4. Under the circumstances of this case a moiety of the cargo saved is a fair allowance for salvage, and freight should be allowed on the other moiety from Behring's Straits to New York.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the southern district of New York.

The facts are fully set forth in the opinion.

*Mr. O'Connor*, for appellants.

*Mr. Lord*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [\* 156]

The libellants, owners of the ship *Richmond* and cargo, filed the libel in this case for an adjustment of salvage.

They allege, that the ship *Richmond* left the port of Cold Spring, Long Island, on a whaling voyage to the North and South Pacific ocean, in July, 1846; that on the 2d of August, 1849, in successful prosecution of her voyage, and having nearly a full cargo, she was run upon some rocks on the coast of Behring's Straits, about a half mile from shore; that while so disabled, the whaling ships *Elizabeth Frith* and the *Panama*, being in the same neighborhood, and about to return home, but not having full cargoes, each took on board some seven or eight hundred barrels of oil and a large quantity of whalebone from the *Richmond*; that these vessels have arrived in the port of Sag Harbor, and their owners are proceeding to sell said oil, &c., without adjusting or demanding salvage, unjustly setting up a pretended sale of the *Richmond* and her cargo to them by her master.

The libellants pray to have possession delivered to them of the oil, &c., or its proceeds, if sold, subject to "*salvage and freight.*"

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The claimants, who are owners of the ships Frith and Panama, allege, in their answer, that the Richmond was wholly and irrevocably wrecked; that her officers and crew had abandoned her, and gone on a barren and uninhabited shore near by; that [ \* 157 ] \* there were no inhabitants or persons on that part of the globe, from whom any relief could be obtained, or who would accept her cargo, or take charge thereof, for a salvage compensation; that the cargo of the Richmond, though valuable in a good market, was of little or no value where she lay; that the season during which it was practicable to remain was nigh its close; that the entire destruction of both vessel and cargo was inevitable, and the loss of the lives of the crew almost certain; that, under these circumstances, the master of the Richmond concluded to sell the vessel at auction, and so much of her cargo as was desired by the persons present, which was done on the following day, with the assent of the whole ship's company.

Respondents aver that this sale was a fair, honest, and valid sale of the property, made from necessity, in good faith, and for the best interests of all concerned, and that they are the rightful and *bona fide* owners of the portions of the cargo respectively purchased by them.

The district court decreed in favor of claimants; on appeal to the circuit court, this decree was reversed; the sale was pronounced void, and the respondents treated as salvors only, and permitted to retain a moiety of the proceeds of the property as salvage.

The claimants have appealed to this court, and the questions proposed for our consideration are, 1st, whether, under the peculiar circumstances of this case, the sale should be treated as conferring a valid title; and, if not, 2d, whether the salvage allowed was sufficient.

1. In the examination of the first question, we shall not inquire whether there is any truth in the allegation that the master of the Richmond was in such a state of bodily and mental infirmity as to render him incapable of acting; or whether he was governed wholly by the undue influence and suggestions of his brother, the master of the Frith. For the decision of this point, it will not be found necessary to impute to him either weakness of intellect or want of good faith.

It cannot be doubted that a master has power to sell both vessel and cargo in certain cases of absolute necessity. This, though now the received doctrine of the modern English and American cases, has not been universally received as a principle of maritime law. The Consulado del Mare (art. 253) allows the master a power to

sell, when a vessel becomes unseaworthy from age ; while the laws of Oleron and Wisby, and the ancient French ordinances, deny such power to the master in any case. The reason given by Valin is, that such a permission, under any circumstances, would tend to encourage fraud. But while the power is not denied, its exercise should be closely \*scrutinized by the court, [\* 158] lest it be abused. Without pretending to enumerate or classify the multitude of cases on this subject, or to state all the possible conditions under which this necessity may exist, we may say that it is applied to cases where the vessel is disabled, stranded, or sunk ; where the master has no means and can raise no funds to repair her so as to prosecute his voyage ; yet, where the *spes recuperandi*, may have a value in the market, or the boats, the anchor, or the rigging, are or may be saved, and have a value in market ; where the cargo, though damaged, has a value, because it has a market, and it may be for the interest of all concerned that it be sold. All the cases assume the fact of a sale, in a civilized country, where men have money, where there is a market and competition. They have no application to wreck in a distant ocean, where the property is derelict, or about to become so, and the person who has it in his power to save the crew and salve the cargo prefers to drive a bargain with the master. The necessity in such a case may be imperative, because it is the price of safety, but it is not of that character which permits the master to exercise this power.

As many of the circumstances attending this case are peculiar and novel, it may not be improper to give a brief statement of them. The Richmond, after a ramble of three years on the Pacific, in pursuit of whales, had passed through the sea of Anadin, and was near Behring's Straits, in the Arctic ocean, on the 2d of August, 1849. She had nearly completed her cargo, and was about to return ; but, during a thick fog, she was run upon rocks, within half a mile of the shore, and in a situation from which it was impossible to extricate her. The master and crew escaped in their boats to the shore, holding communication with the vessel, without much difficulty or danger. They could probably have transported the cargo to the beach, but this would have been unprofitable labor, as its condition would not have been improved. Though saved from the ocean, it would not have been safe. The coast was barren ; the few inhabitants, savages and thieves. This ocean is navigable for only about two months in the year ; during the remainder of the year it is sealed up with ice. The winter was expected to commence within fifteen or twenty days, at farthest. The nearest port of safety and general commercial intercourse was at the Sandwich

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Islands, five thousand miles distant. Their only hope of escape from this inhospitable region was by means of other whaling vessels, which were known to be cruising at no great distance, and who had been in company with the Richmond, and had pursued the same course.

On the 5th of August the fog cleared off, and the ship [ \* 159 ] \*Elizabeth Frith was seen at a short distance. The officers of the Richmond immediately went on board, and the master informed the master of the Frith of the disaster which had befallen the Richmond. He requested him to take his crew on board, and said "You need not whale any more ; there is plenty of oil there, which you may take, and get away as soon as possible." On the following day they took on board the Frith about 300 barrels oil from the Richmond. On the 6th, the Panama and the Junior came near ; they had not quite completed their cargoes ; as there was more oil in the Richmond than they could all take, it was proposed that they also should complete their cargoes in the same way. Captain Tinkham, of the Junior, proposed to take part of the crew of the Richmond, and said he would take part of the oil, "provided it was put up and sold at auction." In pursuance of this suggestion, advertisements were posted on each of the three vessels, signed *by* or *for* the master of the Richmond. On the following day the forms of an auction sale were enacted ; the master of the Frith bidding one dollar per barrel for as much as he needed, and the others seventy-five cents. The ship and tackle were sold for five dollars ; no money was paid, and no account kept or bill of sale made out. Each vessel took enough to complete her cargo of oil and bone. The transfer was effected in a couple of days, with some trouble and labor, but little or no risk or danger, and the vessels immediately proceeded on their voyage, stopping as usual at the Sandwich Islands.

Now, it is evident, from this statement of the facts, that, although the Richmond was stranded near the shore upon which her crew and even her cargo might have been saved from the dangers of the sea, they were really in no better situation as to ultimate safety than if foundered or disabled in the midst of the Pacific ocean. The crew were glad to escape with their lives. The ship and cargo, though not actually derelict, must necessarily have been abandoned. The contrivance of an auction sale, under such circumstances, where the master of the Richmond was hopeless, helpless, and passive—where there was no market, no money, no competition—where one party had absolute power, and the other no choice but submission—where the vendor must take what is offered or get nothing—is a transaction which has no characteristic of a valid contract. It has been

contended by the claimants that it would be a great hardship to treat this sale as a nullity, and thus compel them to assume the character of salvors, because they were not bound to save this property, especially at so great a distance from any port of safety, and in a place where they could have completed their cargo in a short time from their own \*catchings, and where sal- [\* 160] vage would be no compensation for the loss of this opportunity. The force of these arguments is fully appreciated, but we think they are not fully sustained by the facts of the case. Whales may have been plenty around their vessels on the 6th and 7th of August, but, judging of the future from the past, the anticipation of filling up their cargo in the few days of the season in which it would be safe to remain, was very uncertain, and barely probable. The whales were retreating towards the north pole, where they could not be pursued, and, though seen in numbers on one day, they would disappear on the next; and, even when seen in greatest numbers, their capture was uncertain. By this transaction, the vessels were enabled to proceed at once on their home voyage; and the certainty of a liberal salvage allowance for the property rescued will be ample compensation for the possible chance of greater profits, by refusing their assistance in saving their neighbor's property.

It has been contended, also, that the sale was justifiable and valid, because it was better for the interests of all concerned to accept what was offered, than suffer a total loss. But this argument proves too much, as it would justify every sale to a salvor. Courts of admiralty will enforce contracts made for salvage service and salvage compensation, where the salvor has not taken advantage of his power to make an unreasonable bargain; but they will not tolerate the doctrine that a salvor can take the advantage of his situation, and avail himself of the calamities of others to drive a bargain; nor will they permit the performance of a public duty to be turned into a traffic of profit. (See 1 Sumner, 210.) The general interests of commerce will be much better promoted by requiring the salvor to trust for compensation to the liberal recompense usually awarded by courts for such services. We are of opinion, therefore, that the claimants have not obtained a valid title to the property in dispute, but must be treated as salvors.

2. As to the amount of salvage.

While we assent to the general rule stated by this court, in *Hobart v. Dorgan*, (10 Peters, 119,) that "it is against policy and public convenience to encourage appeals of this sort in matters of discretion," yet it is equally true, that where the law gives a party an appeal, he has a right to demand the conscientious judgment of



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the appellate court on every question arising in the cause. Hence many cases are to be found where the appellate court have either increased or diminished the allowance of salvage originally made, even where it did not "violate any of the just principles which should regulate the subject." (See *The Thetis*, 2 Knapp, 410.)

[ \* 161 ] \* Where it is not fixed by statute, the amount of salvage must necessarily rest on an enlarged discretion, according to the circumstances of each case.

The case before us is properly one of derelict. In such cases, it has frequently been asserted, as a general rule, that the compensation should not be more than half nor less than a third of the property saved. But we agree with Dr. Lushington, (*The Florence*, 20 E. L. and C. R. 622,) "that the reward in derelict cases should be governed by the same principles as other salvage cases—namely, danger to property, value, risk of life, skill, labor, and the duration of the service;" and that "no valid reason can be assigned for fixing a reward for salving derelict property at a moiety or any given proportion; and that the true principle is, adequate reward, according to the circumstances of the case." (See, also, *The Thetis*, cited above.)

The peculiar circumstances of this case, which distinguish it from all others, and which would justify the most liberal allowance for salvage, is the distance from the home port, twenty-seven thousand miles; and from the Sandwich Islands, the nearest port of safety, five thousand miles. The transfer of the property from the wreck required no extraordinary exertions or hazards, nor any great delay. The greatest loss incurred was the possible chance, that before the season closed in, the salving vessels might have taken a full cargo of their own oil. But we think this uncertain and doubtful speculation will be fairly compensated by the certainty of a moiety of the salved property at the first port of safety. The libellants claim only the balance, "after deducting salvage and *freight*," conceding that, under the circumstances, the salvors were entitled to both. When the property was brought to a port of safety, the salvage service was complete, and the salvors should be allowed freight for carrying the owners' moiety over twenty thousand miles to a better market, at the home port. As this case has presented very unusual circumstances, and as we think the claimants have acted in good faith in making their defense, all the taxed costs should be paid out of the fund in court.

The case is therefore remitted to the circuit court, to have the amount due to each party adjusted, according to the principles stated.

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## THE BRIG ANN ELIZABETH.

E. J. DUPONT DE NEMOURS &amp; Co., Appellants, v. JOHN VANCE and others.

19 H. 162.

## SEAWORTHINESS—LIABILITY OF VESSEL TO GENERAL AVERAGE FOR JETTISON—PLEADINGS IN ADMIRALTY.

1. Consideration of what constitutes seaworthiness in a vessel. Capacity to resist ordinary action of the sea during the voyage, without loss or damage to the cargo.
2. Where a cargo has been lawfully jettisoned to save the vessel, the owner of the cargo has a maritime lien on the vessel for its contributory share of the general average compensation.
3. This lien may be enforced by a proper proceeding *in rem* against the vessel and the residue of the cargo, if it has not been delivered.
4. The rules of pleading in admiralty are simple, and free from technicalities; therefore, though the libel be for a failure to deliver the cargo, if the defense set up shows a jettison for which the vessel is liable to contribution on general average to the libellants, the court may decree in favor of libellants on such pleadings the amount so due. There is no such thing as a technical variance in admiralty practice.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and the case is well stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Gerhard*, for appellants.

*Mr. Bayard*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 165 ]

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the eastern district of Louisiana.

The libel alleges that the appellants shipped on board the brig Ann Elizabeth, at Wilmington, in the State of Delaware, a large quantity of gunpowder, to be carried to New Orleans, in the State of Louisiana; and that, on the shipment thereof,

\* bills of lading, in the usual form, were signed by the [ \* 166 ] master of the brig; that, according to the invoices of the merchandise, specified in the bills of lading, its value was \$7,233.-75; that, on the arrival of the brig at New Orleans, the libellants required the delivery of the merchandise thus shipped, but they received only a part thereof; and that the part not delivered consisted of 1,646 packages, which, according to the same invoice valuation, amounted to the sum of \$5,936.54.

The libel further alleges that no part of that sum has been paid to the libellants; and it prays process against the brig, and a decree for the damages thus demanded, and for such other relief as shall to law and justice appertain.

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The master of the brig, intervening for his own interest and that of his part owners, admits that the shipment of goods was made, as alleged in the libel; but propounds that, in the course of the voyage, it became necessary, for the safety of all concerned, through the perils and dangers of the seas, to make a jettison of that part of the libellant's goods which were shipped and not delivered.

The first question is, whether the claimant has shown, in support of his defensive allegation, that the jettison was occasioned by a peril of the sea. If it was, then the carrier is exonerated from the delivery of the merchandise, and has only to respond for that part of its value which is his just contributory share towards indemnity for the common loss by the jettison. A jettison, the necessity for which was occasioned solely by a peril of the sea, is a loss by a peril of the sea, and within the exception contained in the bill of lading.

But, if the unseaworthiness of the vessel, at the time of sailing on the voyage, caused, or contributed to produce, the necessity for the jettison, the loss is not within the exception of perils of the seas.

That there was such a necessity for this jettison as justified the master in making it, we think, is proved. In the case of *Lawrence v. Minturn*, (17 How. 109,) this court had occasion to consider the extent of the authority of the master to make a jettison. We then held, that "if he was a competent master; if an emergency actually existed, calling for a decision whether to make a jettison of a part of the cargo; if he appears to have arrived at his decision, with due deliberation, by a fair exercise of his skill and discretion, with no unreasonable timidity, and with an honest intent to do his duty, the jettison is lawful. It will be deemed to have been necessary for the common safety, because the person to whom the law has entrusted authority to decide upon and make it, has duly exercised that authority."

[ \* 167 ] \* We find the case at bar is within this rule. We do not detail the evidence, because the authority of the master to make the jettison has not been seriously controverted.

This part of the case turns upon the other inquiry, whether the vessel was unseaworthy for the voyage, when it was begun.

It is the hull of the vessel which is alleged to have been unseaworthy. To constitute seaworthiness of the hull of a vessel in respect to cargo, the hull must be so tight, stanch, and strong as to be competent to resist all ordinary action of the sea, and to prosecute and complete the voyage without damage to the cargo under deck.

If a vessel, during the voyage, has leaked so much as to injure the cargo, or render a jettison of it necessary, one mode of testing

seaworthiness is, to ascertain what defects, occasioning leakage, were found in the vessel at the end of the voyage; and then to inquire which of those defects are attributable to perils of the seas, encountered during the voyage, and which, if any, existed when it was begun; and if any of the latter be found, the remaining inquiry is, whether they were such as to render the vessel incompetent to resist the ordinary attacks of the sea, in the course of the particular voyage, without damage or loss of cargo.

This vessel, on her arrival at New Orleans, was taken into dock, and examined. She was found to be a new vessel, and that she had been strained. A but, about midships, at or near the third or fourth streak, was started. The hood-ends forward were also strained, and, on trial, it was found they would take about a thread of oakum.

Two worm holes were also found in her bow, about three-eighths of an inch in diameter—one about three streaks from the keel, the other a little higher up. As the vessel was new, there seems to be no doubt these holes were in the plank when put on the vessel, but from some cause remained undiscovered.

The vessel sailed from Wilmington on the afternoon of the 21st of December, 1852. The wind being northeast and strong, the vessel came to anchor at Reedy Island, and on the 22d proceeded to sea. The master, being a part owner and claimant, has not been examined. The first officer appears to have died before the proofs were taken in the circuit court. No account is given of the second officer or the crew, except one seaman, who, together with two passengers, have been examined on the part of the claimants, to prove the occurrences of the voyage. It would have been more satisfactory to have had the evidence of one or more officers of the vessel, and especially of the mate, with his log-book. Still, these three witnesses do satisfactorily show, that on the night of the 23d of December, \* the brig encountered a strong [ \* 168 ] gale and heavy seas, causing her to labor and strain badly.

This weather continued, and the sea became more heavy, up to the night of the 27th. Until about 8 o'clock that night, it was not known the vessel was leaking; but, on sounding the pumps at that time, it was found that the vessel had two feet of water in the hold. The pumps were manned and kept going, but the leak increased two feet in about two hours. The jettison was then made, and the vessel so far relieved that the pumps could control the leak, and the vessel, with the residue of the cargo, arrived at New Orleans.

It is manifest that the vessel encountered extraordinary action of

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the sea; and, as the vessel appears to have been new, and generally stanch and well fastened, the defects found at New Orleans, except the worm holes, are fairly attributable to this cause. The starting of a but, and the opening of the hood-ends of a new vessel of ordinary strength, indicate a very uncommon degree of strain; and such defects would alone account for the amount of leakage of a vessel heavily laden, and exposed to such a sea as is described.

We do not think the existence of the worm-holes amount to unseaworthiness. Any leak which might have been occasioned by them in any ordinary sea does not appear to have been such as the pumps could not control, without damage to the cargo. All vessels have leaks; and, independent of the strains received from the violent action of the sea, we are not satisfied this vessel would have leaked so much that the pumps could not have controlled the water in her hold, and prevented its doing damage to the cargo.

We find, therefore, that the vessel is exonerated from the claim for the full value of the merchandise; and the remaining question is, whether the vessel is chargeable with any part of the value of the merchandise in this cause.

When a lawful jettison of cargo is made, and the vessel and its remaining cargo are thereby relieved from the impending peril, and ultimately arrive in the port of destination, though the shipper has not a lien on the vessel for the value of his merchandise jettisoned, he has a lien for that part of its value which the vessel and its freight are bound to contribute towards his indemnity for the sacrifice which has been made for the common benefit. And this lien on the vessel is a maritime lien, operating by the maritime law as a hypothecation of the vessel and capable of being enforced by proceedings *in rem*.

The right of the shipper to resort to the vessel for claims growing directly out of his contract of affreightment, has very long existed in the general maritime law. It is found asserted [ \* 169 ] \* in a variety of forms in the Consulado, the most ancient and important of all the old codes of sea laws, (see chaps. 63, 106, 227, 254, 259;) and the maxim that the ship is bound to the merchandise, and the merchandise to the ship, for the performance of the obligations created by the contract of affreightment, is a settled rule of our maritime law. (The Schooner Freeman, 18 How. 182; The Ship Packet, 3 Mason, 261; The Volunteer, 1 Sum. 550; The Reeside, 2 Sum. 467; The Rebecca, Ware's R. 188; The Phœbe, Ib. 263; The Waldo, Davies's R. 161; The Gold Hunter, 1 Blatch. and How. 305.)

Pothier declares (Treatise of Charter-parties, preliminary chapter

on Average) that the right to contribution in general average is dependent on the contract of affreightment, which embraces in effect an undertaking, that if the goods of the shipper are damaged for the common benefit, he shall receive a due indemnity by contribution from the owners of the ship, and of other merchandise benefited by the sacrifice.

The power and duty of the master to retain and cause a judicial sale of the merchandise saved, has also been long established. (Consulado del Mare, ch. 51, 52, 53, and note 1 in vol. 3, p. 103 of Pardessus's Collection; Laws of Oleron, art. 9; Ord. de la Marine, Liv. 3, tit. 8, sec. 21, 25; Nesbit on Ins. 135; Strong v. New York Firemen's Insurance Company, 11 John. R. 323; Simonds v. White, 2 B. and C. 805; Loring v. The Neptune Insurance Company, 20 Pick. 411; 3 Kent. Com. 243, 244.) And this right to enforce a judicial sale, through what we term a lien *in rem*, is not confined to the merchandise, but extends to the vessel.

Emerigon, (ch. 12, sec. 43,) speaking generally of an action of contribution, says it is in its nature a real action. Cassaregis, (dis. 45, N. 34,) "*est in rem scripta.*"

It would be extraordinary if the right to a lien were not reciprocal; if it existed in favor of the vessel, when sacrifice was made of part or the whole of its value, for preservation of the cargo, and not against the vessel, when sacrifice was made of the cargo for preservation of the vessel.

By the ancient admiralty law, the master could bind both the ship and cargo by an express hypothecation, to obtain a ransom on capture. So he could, and still may, when the whole enterprise has fallen into distress, which could not otherwise be relieved, hypothecate both the vessel and cargo to obtain means of relief. These are cases of express hypothecation made by the master, under the authority conferred on him by the maritime law; but he can also sell a part of the cargo to enable him to prosecute his voyage, or deliver a part of it in payment of ransom of his vessel, and the residue of the \* cargo, on capture; and [\* 170] when he does so, the law of the sea creates a lien on the vessel, as security for the reimbursement of the loss of the shipper whose goods have been sacrificed. (The Packet, 3 Mason, 255; Pope v. Nickerson, 3 Story's R. 492; The Gold Hunter, 1 Blatch. and How. 300; The Boston, Ib. 309; Consol. del Mare, ch. 105; Laws of Oleron, art. 25; Ord. of Antwerp, art. 19; Emerigon Con. a la Grosse, ch. 4, secs. 9, 11.)

The authority to make a jettison of cargo is derived from the same source; an instant necessity, incapable of being provided for



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save by a sacrifice of part of what is committed to the master's care, and the presumed consent of the owners of all the subjects at risk, that the loss shall become a charge upon what is benefited by the sacrifice. (The Gratitude, 3 Rob. 210.) If the sacrifice be made to enable the vessel to perform the voyage, by paying what the owners are bound to pay to complete it, the charge is on the vessel and its owners. If it be made to relieve the adventure from a peril which has fallen on all the subjects engaged in it, the risk of which peril was not assumed by the carrier, the charge is to be borne proportionably by all the interests, and there is a lien on each to the extent of its just contributory obligation. This authority of the master to make the sacrifice, and this consent of the owners of the subjects at risk to have it made, and their implied undertaking to contribute towards the loss, are viewed by the admiralty law as sufficient to create an hypothecation of the subjects benefited, for the security of the payment of the several sums for which those subjects are respectively liable. In other words, as the master is authorized to relieve the adventurer from distress, by means of an express hypothecation, in case of capture or distress in port, or by means of a sale of part of the cargo, thereby creating a maritime lien on the property ultimately benefited, in favor of the owner of what is sold or hypothecated; so he may also, in a case of necessity at sea, make a jettison of cargo, and thereby create a lien on the property thus saved from peril. Pothier (Con. Mar. n. 34, 72) and Emerigon (Con. a la Grosse, ch. 4, sec. 9) say that the sale of part of the cargo in port, to supply the necessities of the ship, is a kind of forced loan. Though the sacrifice of part of the cargo at sea cannot be considered a loan, it is a forced appropriation of it to the general benefit of those engaged in a common adventure, under a contract of affreightment; and such use of the property of one, for the benefit of others, creates a charge on what was thus saved, for what may fairly be termed the price of that safety. (Abbott on Shipping, part 4, ch. 10, s. 6.)

[ \* 171 ] \* In *United States v. Wilder*, (3 Sumner, 311,) which was a case of general average, Mr. Justice Story likens it to a case of salvage, where safety is obtained by sacrifices of labor and danger, made for the common benefit; and he says the general maritime law gives a lien *in rem* for the contribution, not as the only remedy, but as in many cases the best remedy, and in some cases the only remedy. In the district and circuit courts of the United States, this jurisdiction has been exercised, and some cases of this kind are found in the books, though most of their decisions are not in print. (The Mary, 5 Law Reporter, 75; 6 Ib. 73; The

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Cargo of the George, 8 Law Reporter, 361; Sparks v. Kittredge, 9 Law Reporter, 349; Dunlap's Ad. Pr. 57; 2 Browne's Civ. and Ad. Law, 122; The Packet; The Gold Hunter; The Boston, (above cited.) The restricted admiralty jurisdiction in England seems insufficient to enforce this lien. (The Constancia, 2 W. Rob. 487.)

Nor is there anything in the case of Cutler v. Rae, decided by this court in 1849, and reported in 7 How. 729, which conflicts with the view we have now taken.

That was a libel by the owner of a vessel against the consignee of cargo, to recover the contributory share of the average due from the goods which the master had voluntarily delivered to the respondent before the libel was filed. The court decided, that though the master, as the agent of the owner of the vessel in that case, had by the maritime law, a lien upon the goods, as security for the payment of their just contribution, this lien was lost by their voluntary delivery to the consignee; and that the implied promise to contribute could not be enforced by an action *in personam* against the consignee, in the admiralty. This admits the existence of a lien, arising out of the admiralty law, but puts it on the same footing as a maritime lien on cargo for the price of its transportation; which, as is well known, is waived by an authorized delivery without insisting on payment.

On full consideration, we are of opinion that when cargo is lawfully jettisoned, its owner has, by the maritime law, a lien on the vessel for its contributory share of the general average compensation; and that the owner of the cargo may enforce payment thereof by a proper proceeding *in rem* against the vessel, and against the residue of the cargo, if it has not been delivered.

The remaining question is, whether the pleadings in this case are in such form as to present this claim for the consideration of this court, and entitle the libellant to assert a lien on the vessel for its contribution.

The rules of pleading in the admiralty are exceedingly \* simple and free from technical requirements. It is incumbent on the libellant to propound with distinctness the substantive facts on which he relies; to pray, either specially or generally, for the relief appropriate to them; and to ask for such process of the court as is suited to the action, whether *in rem* or *in personam*.

It is incumbent on the respondent to answer distinctly each substantive fact alleged in the libel, either admitting or denying, or declaring his ignorance thereof, and to allege such other facts as

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he relies upon as a defense, either in part or in whole, to the case made by the libel.

The proofs of each party must correspond substantially with his allegations, so as to prevent surprise. But there are no technical rules of variance, or departure in pleading, like those in the common law, nor is the court precluded from granting the relief appropriate to the case appearing on the record, and prayed for by the libel, because that entire case is not distinctly stated in the libel. Thus, in cases of collision, it frequently occurs that the libel alleges fault of the claimant's vessel; the answer denies it, and alleges fault of the libellant's vessel. The court finds, on the proofs, that both were in fault, and apportions the damages.

Looking to this libel, we find it states that a contract of affreightment was made to transport these goods from Wilmington to New Orleans, on board this brig; that the goods were laden on board, and the brig had arrived, but only a part of the goods have been delivered. It states the value of the part not delivered, avers that the libellants have not been paid any part of that sum, prays for process against the brig, and a decree for the value of the merchandise not delivered, and also for such other relief as to law and justice may appertain.

The answer admits all the facts stated in the libel, but sets up, by way of defensive allegation, a necessary jettison of that part of the cargo not delivered. It is manifest, that though this answers, in part, the claim for damages made by the libel, it does not wholly answer it. It shows sufficient cause why the libellant should not assert a lien on the brig for the whole value of his merchandise, but at the same time shows that the libellant has a valid lien on the brig for that part of the value of the merchandise which the vessel is bound to contribute. While it asserts that the performance of the contract of affreightment by transportation of the merchandise to New Orleans was excused by a peril of the sea, it admits that an obligation arose out of the relations of the parties created by that contract of affreightment, and out of the facts relied on as an excuse for not transporting the merchandise; [ \* 173 ] that this \* obligation was to pay to the shipper a part of the value of his goods; that it was the duty of the master, at the port of New Orleans, to ascertain what part of that value the vessel was bound to contribute, and that there is a lien on the vessel to secure its payment.

If the technical rules of common-law pleading existed in the admiralty, there might be difficulty in admitting a claim for general average, in an action founded on a contract of affreightment; be-

cause, though the claim for such average grows out of the contract of affreightment, the implied promise to pay it is technically different from the promise on the face of a bill of lading. In the case of *Pope v. Nickerson*, (3 Story, 465,) Mr. Justice Story went into a very extensive examination of such claims, under an agreed statement of facts, in an action of *assumpsit* on bills of lading; and it does not seem to have occurred, either to him or the counsel, that it was inconsistent with any substantial rule of the common law so to do.

But in the admiralty, as we have said, there are no technical rules of variance or departure. The court decrees upon the whole matter before it, taking care to prevent surprise, by not allowing either party to offer proof touching any substantive fact not alleged or denied by him.

But where, as in this case, the defensive allegation of the respondent makes a complete case for the libellant, so that no evidence in support of it is required, and where that case is within the form of action and the prayer of relief, and the process used by the libellant, we think it not a sufficient reason for refusing relief, that the precise case on which the court think fit to grant it is not set out in the libel.

We understand, that in the court below the libellants relied on the duty of the master to adjust and collect, and pay to them, the general average contributions, as precluding the defense of a necessary jettison. We think this defense was properly overruled. The libellants did not there insist on their lien on the vessel for its contribution. We do not consider their failure to do so precludes them from calling on this court to make that decree, to which the record shows they are entitled. In *Finlay v. Lynn*, (6 Cranch, 238,) this court was of opinion that the appellant, whose bill was dismissed by the circuit court, was entitled to an account, on a ground not assumed in the circuit court. This court said: "The plaintiff probably did not apply for this account in the court below, and it does not appear to have been a principal object of his bill. This court therefore doubted whether it would be most proper to affirm the decree dismissing the bill, with the addition that it should be without prejudice to any future claim \*for profits, and [ \* 174 ] for the debt due from one store to the other, or to open the decree and direct the account. The latter is deemed the more equitable course. The decree, therefore, is to be reversed, and the cause remanded, with directions to take an account of the profits of the jewelry store, if the same shall be demanded by the plaintiff." But, as the libellants failed to call the attention of the circuit court

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to this view of their rights, and placed their claim there solely on the grounds that the jettison was unlawful, or, if lawful, could not be a defense, because the master had failed to do the duty incumbent on him in a case of general average, we think the decree should be reversed, without costs. The cause must be remanded to the circuit court, with directions to ascertain the amount of the lien of the libellants on the Ann Elizabeth, for the share to be contributed by the vessel towards the loss sustained by the libellants, and to enter a decree accordingly.

Mr. Justice CATRON and Mr. Justice CAMPBELL dissented.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL. I dissent from that part of the opinion of this court which allows to the libellants a decree against the libellee for the amount of his contributory share in the account of average.

The libel is for the non-delivery of cargo according to the conditions of a bill of lading. The exemption claimed in the answer is, that the failure was occasioned by a peril of the seas, which made a jettison of the goods necessary; and this issue was tried in the district and circuit courts.

The objection raised here is, that the exemption is not complete, unless the contributory share of the libellee, to be ascertained, in the first place, by the adjustment of an average account, is also admitted and tendered.

In *Bird v. Astcott*, (Bulst. 280,) which was an action on the case against a carrier for the non-delivery of goods lost by a jettison, Coke, Lord Ch. J., cited a case which had been decided, and said, in respect to it, "We all did resolve, that this being the act of God, this sudden storm, which occasioned the throwing over of the goods, and which could not be avoided; and for this reason the plaintiff recovered nothing." (Mouse's case, 12 Co. 63.)

I have not been able to find a precedent, either in the United States or Great Britain, where a contributory share, in the nature of average, has been recovered, in a contentious litigation, in an action on a bill of lading for the non-delivery of cargo.

But the books of precedents show that average contributions [ \* 175 ] are recovered in actions, either of special or general *assumpsit*, the form of the action depending on the fact of the adjustment of the account. (2 Chit. Plead. 50, 152, 161; Saund. Plead. and Ev. 278.)

"I entertain a decided opinion," said Chancellor, then Ch. J. Kent, "that the established principles of pleading, which compose what is called its science, are rational, concise, luminous, and

ought, consequently, to be very carefully touched by the hand of innovation," (1 Joh. 471, Bayard v. Malcolm.) And the advantage of an orderly, not to say scientific system of administration, is as apparent in the courts of admiralty, and the mischiefs of uncertainty or inexactness are as positive there, as in any other tribunals. Such seems to have been the opinion of Justice Story. (The Boston, 1 Sum. 328.) This difference in opinion with the court would not have been the ground of a public dissent on my part, if I had not deemed the decree erroneous, and if I did not believe that the parent error is to be found in this departure from accurate pleading. The decree treats the liability of the master or owner for an average contribution as an integral part of their special written contract of affreightment; and their failure to pay their share of average is disposed of as a breach of the express obligation. My opinion is, that the obligations are distinct, though intimately associated, and are referable to different principles of law, and in the judicial administration of the United States may be subject to distinct jurisdictions.

The principle of the rule of general contribution, as applied to the case of a jettison, exists in all commercial nations; and the rule itself became a part of the statute law of England, in the reign of the conqueror, and that of his youngest son. In a later period, the same principle was applied to a great number of analogous cases.

The inquiry is, upon what courts was the duty devolved of enforcing and administering this principle of general jurisprudence, and particularly in the cases of average? In Berkley v. Peregrave, (1 East. 220,) which was a special action of assumpsit for average on an unadjusted average account, Lord Kenyon says: "This action, the grounds and nature of which are fully set out in the special count, is founded in the common principles of justice. A loss is incurred, which the law directs shall be borne by certain persons in their several proportions. When a loss is to be repaired in damages, where else can they be recovered but in the courts of common law? And wherever the law gives a right, generally, to demand payment of another, it raises an implied promise in that person to pay." In Dobson v. Wilson, (3 Camp. 480,) Lord Ellenborough said: "A \*court of equity may [\* 176] perhaps be a more convenient forum for adjusting the claims of the different parties concerned; but if a shipper of goods, which are sacrificed for the salvation of the rest of the cargo, is entitled to receive a contribution from another shipper whose goods are saved, I know not how I can say this may not be recovered by



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an action at law. This is a legal right, and must be accompanied with a legal remedy. The difficulty of showing, by strict evidence, the exact amount of the contribution, is great but, as there are data upon which it may be calculated with great certainty, I think, is no objection to the action." (Price v. Noble, 4 Taun. 123.)

Holroyd, in the argument of the case in East said: "At the common law, where a contribution was required, a writ of contribution issued, precedents of which are to be found, (Fitz. Nat. Brev.) This has fallen into disuse; because, in most instances, as many persons were concerned, a more easy remedy was administered in equity."

And so, from the earliest of the chancery reports, we learn, that chancery will enforce an average or contribution to be made, when necessary, and that it will enforce an agreement among merchants to pay average. (Comyns's Dig. Chan. 2 J. 2 S.; Hick v. Pallington, Moor. 442; Ca. Parl. 19.) Spence, in his History of Equitable Jurisdiction, says, "That the court of chancery, from a period which cannot be traced, but which, as it was also apparently adopted from the Roman law, was probably coeval with the establishment of the court, exercised jurisdiction to compel contribution amongst general shippers of goods, when those belonging to one were thrown overboard for the safety of the ship, or in cases, as they are technically called, of general average." (1 Spence. Eq. Ju. 663.) The popular treatises on the chancery system show that the title "Contribution" is one of great reach, comprehending a variety of cases which rests upon a familiar maxim of equity, and that average is only an instance of its application. How stands the historical evidence in regard to the jurisdiction of the admiralty courts, with reference to this subject? What say the "Black Book" and "Godolphin," or the controversionalists, Prynne, or Jenkins, in support of the ancient claims of these tribunals? What is to be found in the treaty of limits between the courts of common law and admiralty? In the case of the *Constancia*, (2 Rob. 488,) a question arose upon the distribution of the proceeds of a ship and cargo, which were on deposit in the registry of the court, in a cause in which its jurisdiction was indisputable.

The claimant asserted a preference in the distribution, because a portion of the cargo belonging to him had been sold [ \* 177 ] \*for the repairs of the ship. The learned judge of that court said: "As far as my own experience extends, no claim of a similar description is to be found in the annals of the court; a circumstance which naturally induces me to consider with some carefulness whether the novelty of the claim be specious or

real. In other words, whether, novel in appearance, it does not rest upon some recognized principles by which other claims have been decided. What, then, is the true character of the claim in question? It is a claim on behalf of the owners of certain property shipped on board of the vessel, and applied to relieve the ship's necessities, and to enable her to complete her voyage.

“In the case of the *Gratitudine*, Lord Stowell has held that property so sacrificed is to be considered as the proper subject of general average; and Lord Tenterden, in his book on shipping, lays down the same doctrine. If this be so, and if, upon the authority of my Lord Stowell, thus confirmed by my Lord Tenterden, I am to consider this claim as a subject of general average, two considerations immediately suggest themselves. First, whether I have any jurisdiction at all over questions of general average; and, secondly, whether I could satisfactorily exercise such a jurisdiction under the circumstances of this case? The absence of any precedent, where the court has exercised the jurisdiction, is of itself a strong *prima facie* proof that I have no authority to entertain the question at all; and I am the more strongly inclined to this opinion, by the further consideration that, in all cases of average, it is essential that the tribunal which is to adjust it should have the power to compel all parties interested to come in, and to pay their quota. I possess no such power; and if I could not bring all parties interested before the court, I could not adjust a general average, which is a proportionate contribution by all.” These citations from the opinions of the various tribunals which administer different departments of the judicial power of Great Britain, show that the doctrine upon which average contributions is made is not peculiar to the maritime code; and, also, that the maritime courts of the first commercial power that has existed have never administered it, and their judges suppose their modes of proceeding unsuitable to it. In the case of the *Constancia*, the *res* was in the custody of the court of admiralty, yet that court denied the existence of a maritime lien, or that any liability of the freighters against the ship could be enforced there. And this is equally apparent from the doctrines of the courts of chancery and law. In *Hallet v. Bonsfield*, (18 Vesey, jr., 187,) which was the case of a shipper whose property had been overthrown to lighten a ship in a storm, and who moved \* to restrain the master [ \* 178 ] and ship-owner from delivering any part of the cargo and receiving the freight, or parting with any share of the ship, Lord Eldon said, “that in such a case there is a lien upon the goods of each freighter, for contribution and average, in some sense; that

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is, the master is not bound to part with any part of the cargo, until he has security from each person for his proportion of the loss; but there is no authority, that on the ground that he has a lien to the extent of entitling him to call on every person to give security for the amount of their average when it shall be adjusted, every owner of a part of the cargo can compel the captain to do so; and it strikes me, upon the short time I have had to consider it, that is a length the plaintiff cannot reach. The defendant, it is true, is a trustee for others, but the nature of the trust is regulated by the practice; and there is no instance of an action, or a suit in equity, to effectuate the lien, otherwise than through the right of the master to take security; that practice ascertaining the true nature and extent of the trust." This lucid statement of the English law explains the meaning of the older class of writers on commercial law, when they speak of the master's lien, and his duty to settle an average account.

Valin observes, that the article of the ordinance of 1681, which confers a right of detention upon the master, does not impose an imperative obligation upon him, and that he may deliver to each freighter his goods, without fear of consequences, unless specially required to withhold them. And other writers concur in the opinion, that the freighters, under that ordinance, had no action against one another. (Boucher Droit Mar. 450, 451.)

Lord Tenterden cites this case from Vesey, jr., without dissent, in his work on shipping, (Abb. on Ship. 508;) and in *Simonds v. White*, (2 B. and C. 805,) he describes the power of the master over the goods "as a power of detention," given in order that the expense, inconvenience, and delay of actions and suits, may be avoided. This court, in *Cutler v. Bae*, (7 Howard, 729,) declared that the party entitled to contribution "has no absolute and unconditional lien upon the goods liable to contribute." The captain has a right to retain them until the general average with which they are charged has been paid or secured; and, that this right of retainer is a "qualified lien," "dependent on the possession of the goods by the master or ship-owners," and "ceases when they are delivered to the owner or consignee;" "and does not follow them into their hands, nor adhere to the proceeds;" and a corresponding opinion of Lord Tenterden is to be found in *Scaife v. Tobin*, (3

Barn. and Ad. 523,) in which he says, "a consignee who [ \* 179 ] is the absolute \* owner of the goods is liable to pay general average, because the law throws upon him that liability; but a mere consignee, who is not the owner, is not liable." And this demonstrates that the lien for average is not a maritime lien.

A maritime lien does not include or require possession. The claim or privilege travels with the thing, into whosoever possession it may come. It is inchoate from the moment the claim or privilege attaches, and when carried into effect by legal process, by a proceeding *in rem*, relates back to the period when it first attached. (Harmer v. Bell, 2 L. and Eq. 63.) These cases show, that neither in the adjudications of the courts of Great Britain or the United States, nor in the usages of their merchants, is there any sanction for the doctrines of this decree. No adjudication during sixty years of our history is to be found, where the power to adjust or to collect an average account is affirmed, or has been exerted by the district courts sitting in admiralty, upon direct application to them for the purpose.

The importance of the subject will justify me in an examination of the continental authorities, which are supposed to establish the existence of a maritime lien for contribution. The ancient codes do nothing more than recognize the existence of a rule of contribution in regard to losses arising from a jettison, or cases of a similar character, and the master's power of detention of the cargo saved, for the security or payment of the contributory shares, but they do not ascribe any greater operation to the rule, either in affecting property or in designating the jurisdictions to which the enforcement of the rule should be committed.

The leading authority cited for the doctrine, that average affords a maritime lien on the property saved, is found in a line of Emerigon, who says, "the action in contribution is real in its nature."

But that author discriminates the feature in a real action to which the action in contribution has any resemblance. The feature is, "that the action vanishes if the effects saved by means of the jettison perish before arriving at their destination."

The real action is for a thing, or to assert some right in it, and is terminated by its surrender, or destruction without the fault of the possessor. So long as the ship and cargo are exposed to peril in the same voyage in which the jettison is made, the action in contribution is inchoate, and dependent on the ultimate safety of the thing; and thus far it resembles a real action. But when the safety of the ship and cargo is confirmed, the liability of the contributories becomes personal, and the sums due are recoverable without further reference to \* them; in France, by [\* 180] action in contribution; and in England, by a bill in equity for contribution, or action of *assumpsit*. It is a great mistake to suppose that the action in contribution was a hypothecary action, as I shall hereafter show.

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In the time of Emerigon it was thrown upon the master, as the legal attorney of all persons interested in the ship and cargo. It was his duty to collect the contributory shares, and to pay them among the parties concerned ; but he was not liable for the shares of insolvents, nor obliged to detain the goods, and that was an unusual, if not an unprecedented remedy.

The ordinance of 1681 simply permitted this remedy to be used. This ordinance was defective, in not defining the rights of the master in the goods liable to contribution. The ordinance did not take the precaution to establish the existence and legitimacy of privileged claims, is the testimony of those who framed the code of commerce of Napoleon. (3 Locré Com. 22.) The code of commerce was framed to repair what was considered a defect. In reference to average, it provides, "that in all the cases before mentioned, the master and mariners have a privilege on the goods or their proceeds for the amount of the contribution." This clause was not in the "projet" of the commission, nor in their revision ; but after successive changes, the article appears in this form for the first time in the final draught of the code. The *jus in re* is conferred by this clause on the master, and he may proceed to enforce his rights by judicial seizure and sale, or opposition, or he may sue each contributory for his share in contribution, and is responsible in an action to each of them. But the evils of dormant liens are removed by limitations upon the extent and duration of the claim. The code bars actions against the freighter who receives his goods and pays his freight without a legal notice of the claim for average ; and each claim must be notified in twenty-four hours to the opposite party, and be pursued by judicial demand in one month. (Thier Droit Con. 41, 124, 277 ; 4 Locré Com. ; 3 Pard. Droit Com. sec. 750 ; 18 Dall. 544.)

Other articles define the liability of the owner, and the contributory share of the ship and cargo, the responsibility of the master, and create a privilege upon the ship and freight to answer the agreements of the charter-party, and whatever defaults of the master and mariners. (Thiernt Con. Droit, 28, sec. 2 ; 29, sec. 11 ; Code de Com. 190, secs. 11, 216, 222, 280.)

The commentaries of Pardessus, Locré, Boulay, Paty, and other authors, are made upon these enactments of French statute [ \* 181 ] law. They affirm that these articles establish, as the \* law of France, that the freighter of a ship is obliged, by a contract or *quasi*-contract to the master, to contribute his share of an average contribution ; and that the master engages to indemnify the freighter whose property has suffered or been sacrificed for the

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common benefit; and that reciprocal rights of action are given to either party. I have no occasion to question the accuracy of their conclusions, nor to deny that the code itself embodies the usages, experience, and regulations, of the French nation in the management of their commerce, and is adapted to the wants and habits of their merchants. And no one can doubt that the authority of Louis XIV and Napoleon was adequate to the introduction of the ordinance and the code. But the question arises here—and it is one of grave import to those who desire to preserve the constitution of the Union inviolate, and the limits it prescribes to the judicial power of the federal government, and the lines of division among the federal courts undisturbed—the question arises, by what authority is it that the commercial system of France, the product of the legislative authority of her monarchs, has become the basis for judicial decision in the courts of the United States, and her legal administration of purely municipal regulations is taken as a guide to determine the jurisdictional limits of those courts of justice? That congress may prescribe rules in reference to the settlement of average contributions, arising in the foreign or federal commerce of the country, may be admitted, and also may assimilate the American and French systems of commercial regulation. But I am not prepared to admit that this can be done by judicial authority.

The commercial systems of Great Britain and the United States recognize no such contract between the masters and freighters as the French code establishes; they invest the master with no such privilege upon the property of the shippers; they confer no such powers to maintain suits, and subject him to no such liabilities. The policy and spirit of the British and American commercial systems tend to restrain the agency and control of subordinates to precise limits in settlements or contests with respect to property and obligations; wherever it can be done, they bring the owners of the property, and the principals in the obligations, to confront one another. In my opinion, this decree introduces a new principle into the American commercial system, and that this interpolation adds to the jurisdiction of the judiciary department of this government. This is done by judicial authority. In my opinion, the constitution does not give such a power to this court. I therefore dissent from the decree.

\* Having carefully examined the foregoing opinion of [ \* 182 ] Mr. Justice CAMPBELL, after it was in print, I am satisfied with its correctness, and concur therein. J. CATRON.



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The Steamer Virginia.

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## THE STEAMER VIRGINIA.

THE OWNERS OF THE STEAMER VIRGINIA, Appellants, v. MICHAEL W. WEST and others.

19 H. 182.

## JURISDICTION OF THIS COURT ON APPEAL.

1. This court has no jurisdiction of an appeal or writ of error where the record is not filed with the clerk during the term next after the appeal is taken or the writ issued.
2. But another appeal or writ of error may be taken and presented within the time limited by statute for appeals and writs of error.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the district of Maryland. The case is stated in the opinion of the court.

*Mr. Johnson*, for appellee, moved to dismiss the appeal.

Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from the circuit court for the district of Maryland.

The decree from which the appeal has been taken was passed by the circuit court on the 17th day of November, 1855, and the appeal was prayed on the same day in open court. But it was not prosecuted to the next succeeding term of this court, [ \* 183 ] \* and no transcript of the record was filed here during that term. But a transcript has been filed at the present term of this court, and the case docketed. And a motion is made to dismiss it, upon the ground that the appeal is not legally before this court, according to the act of congress regulating appeals.

The construction of this act of congress, and the practice of this court under it, has been settled by the cases of *Villalobos v. The United States*, (6 Howard, 81,) and *The United States v. Curry*, (6 Howard, 106.) The transcript must be filed in this court and the case docketed at the term next succeeding the appeal, in order to give this court jurisdiction. This case must therefore be dismissed.

But the dismissal does not bar the appellant from taking and prosecuting another appeal at any time within five years from the date of the decree, provided the transcript is filed here and the case docketed at the term next succeeding the date of such second appeal.

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Brown v. Duchesne.

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## JOHN BROWN, Plaintiff in Error, v. DUCHESNE.

19 H. 183.

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PATENTED ARTICLE USED ON A FOREIGN VESSEL NO VIOLATION OF THE ACT OF CONGRESS.

1. The use of a patented article by a foreign ship, in entering and leaving one of our ports, does not create a right of action in the patentee.
2. The use of such a patent in the construction, fitting out, or equipment of such a vessel is not an infringement of the rights of a patentee, provided it was placed on the vessel in a foreign port, and was authorized by the laws of the country to which she belongs.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the district of Massachusetts. The case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Dana*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Austin*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the [ \* 193 ] court.

This case comes before the court upon a writ of error to the circuit court of the United States for the district of Massachusetts.

The plaintiff in error, who was also plaintiff in the court below, brought this action against the defendant for the infringement of a patent which the plaintiff had obtained for a new and useful improvement in constructing the gaff of sailing vessels. The declaration is in the usual form, and alleges that the defendant used this improvement at Boston without his consent. The defendant pleaded that the improvement in question was used by him only in the gaffs of a French schooner, called the *Alcyon*, of which schooner he was master; that he (the defendant) was a subject of the empire of France; that the vessel was built in France, and owned and manned by French subjects; and, at the time of the alleged infringement, was upon a lawful voyage, under the flag of France, from St. Peters, in the island of Miquelon, one of the colonies of France, to Boston, and thence back to St. Peters, which voyage was not ended at the date of the alleged infringement; and that the gaffs he used were placed on the schooner at or near the time she was launched by the builder in order to fit her for sea.

There is also a second plea containing the same allegations, with the additional averment that the improvement in question had been in common use in French merchant vessels for more than twenty years before the *Alcyon* was built, and was the

\* common and well-known property of every French sub- [ \* 194 ] ject long before the plaintiff obtained his patent.

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The plaintiff demurred generally to each of these pleas, and the defendant joined in demurrer; and the judgment of the circuit court being in favor of the defendant, the plaintiff thereupon brought this writ of error.

The plaintiff, by his demurrer, admits that the *Alcyon* was a foreign vessel, lawfully in a port of the United States for the purposes of commerce, and that the improvement in question was placed on her in a foreign port to fit her for sea, and was authorized by the laws of the country to which she belonged. The question, therefore, presented by the first plea is simply this: whether any improvement in the construction or equipment of a foreign vessel, for which a patent has been obtained in the United States, can be used by such vessel within the jurisdiction of the United States, while she is temporarily there for the purposes of commerce, without the consent of the patentee?

This question depends on the construction of the patent laws. For undoubtedly every person who is found within the limits of a government, whether for temporary purposes, or as a resident, is bound by its laws. The doctrine upon this subject is correctly stated by Mr. Justice Story, in his "*Commentaries on the Conflict of Laws*," (chap. 14, sec. 541,) and the writers on public law to whom he refers. A difficulty may sometimes arise, in determining whether a particular law applies to the citizen of a foreign country, and intended to subject him to its provisions. But if the law applies to him, and embraces his case, it is unquestionably binding upon him when he is within the jurisdiction of the United States.

The general words used in the clause of the patent laws granting the exclusive right to the patentee to use the improvement, taken by themselves, and literally construed, without regard to the object in view, would seem to sanction the claim of the plaintiff. But this mode of expounding a statute has never been adopted by any enlightened tribunal—because it is evident that in many cases it would defeat the object which the legislature intended to accomplish. And it is well settled that, in interpreting a statute, the court will not look merely to a particular clause in which general words may be used, but will take in connection with it the whole statute (or statutes on the same subject) and the objects and policy of the law, as indicated by its various provisions, and give to it such a construction as will carry into execution the will of the legislature, as thus ascertained, according to its true intent and meaning.

[ \* 195 ] \* Neither will the court, in expounding a statute, give to it a construction which would in any degree disarm the government of a power which has been confided to it to be

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used for the general good—or which would enable individuals to embarrass it, in the discharge of the high duties it owes to the community—unless plain and express words indicated that such was the intention of the legislature.

The patent laws are authorized by that article in the constitution which provides that congress shall have power to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries. The power thus granted is domestic in its character, and necessarily confined within the limits of the United States. It confers no power on congress to regulate commerce, or the vehicles of commerce, which belong to a foreign nation, and occasionally visit our ports in their commercial pursuits. That power and the treaty-making power of the general government are separate and distinct powers from the one of which we are now speaking, and are granted by separate and different clauses, and are in no degree connected with it. And when congress are legislating to protect authors and inventors, their attention is necessarily attracted to the authority under which they are acting, and it ought not lightly to be presumed that they intended to go beyond it, and exercise another and distinct power, conferred on them for a different purpose.

Nor is there anything in the patent laws that should lead to a different conclusion. They are all manifestly intended to carry into execution this particular power. They secure to the inventor a just remuneration from those who derive a profit or advantage, within the United States, from his genius and mental labors.

But the right of property which a patentee has in his invention, and his right to its exclusive use, is derived altogether from these statutory provisions; and this court have always held that an inventor has no right of property in his invention, upon which he can maintain a suit, unless he obtains a patent for it, according to the acts of congress; and that his rights are to be regulated and measured by these laws, and cannot go beyond them.

But these acts of congress do not, and were not intended to, operate beyond the limits of the United States; and as the patentee's right of property and exclusive use is derived from them, they cannot extend beyond the limits to which the law itself is confined. And the use of it outside of the jurisdiction of the United States is not an infringement of his rights, and \* he has [ \* 196 ] no claim to any compensation for the profit or advantage the party may derive from it.

The chief and almost only advantage which the defendant derived

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from the use of this improvement was on the high seas, and in other places out of the jurisdiction of the United States. The plea avers that it was placed on her to fit her for sea. If it had been manufactured on her deck while she was lying in the port of Boston, or if the captain had sold it there, he would undoubtedly have trespassed upon the rights of the plaintiff, and would have been justly answerable for the profit and advantage he thereby obtained. For, by coming in competition with the plaintiff, where the plaintiff was entitled to the exclusive use, he thereby diminished the value of his property. Justice, therefore, as well as the act of congress, would require that he should compensate the patentee for the injury he sustained, and the benefit and advantage which he (the defendant) derived from the invention.

But, so far as the mere use is concerned, the vessel could hardly be said to use it while she was at anchor in the port, or lay at the wharf. It was certainly of no value to her while she was in the harbor; and the only use made of it, which can be supposed to interfere with the rights of the plaintiff, was in navigating the vessel into and out of the harbor, when she arrived or was about to depart, and while she was within the jurisdiction of the United States. Now, it is obvious that the plaintiff sustained no damage, and the defendant derived no material advantage, from the use of an improvement of this kind by a foreign vessel in a single voyage to the United States, or from occasional voyages in the ordinary pursuits of commerce; or if any damage is sustained on the one side, or any profit or advantage gained on the other, it is so minute that it is incapable of any appreciable value.

But it seems to be supposed, that this user of the improvement was, by legal intendment, a trespass upon the rights of the plaintiff; and that although no real damage was sustained by the plaintiff, and no profit or advantage gained by the defendant, the law presumes a damage, and that the action may be maintained on that ground. In other words that there is a technical damage, in the eye of the law, although none has really been sustained.

This view of the subject, however, presupposes that the patent laws embrace improvements on foreign ships, lawfully made in their own country, which have been patented here. But that is the question in controversy. And the court is of opinion that cases of that kind were not in the contemplation of congress in [ \* 197 ] enacting the patent laws, and cannot, upon any \* sound construction, be regarded as embraced in them. For such a construction would be inconsistent with the principles that lie at the foundation of these laws; and instead of conferring legal rights

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on the inventor, in order to do equal justice between him and those who profit by his invention, they would confer a power to exact damages where no real damage had been sustained, and would moreover seriously embarrass the commerce of the country with foreign nations. We think these laws ought to be construed in the spirit in which they were made—that is, as founded in justice—and should not be strained by technical constructions to reach cases which congress evidently could not have contemplated, without departing from the principle upon which they were legislating, and going far beyond the object they intended to accomplish.

The construction claimed by the plaintiff would confer on patentees not only rights of property, but also political power, and enable them to embarrass the treaty-making power in its negotiations with foreign nations, and also to interfere with the legislation of congress when exercising its constitutional power to regulate commerce. And if a treaty should be negotiated with a foreign nation, by which the vessels of each party were to be freely admitted into the ports of the other, upon equal terms with its own, upon the payment of the ordinary port charges, and the foreign government faithfully carried it into execution, yet the government of the United States would find itself unable to fulfill its obligations if the foreign ship had about her, in her construction or equipment, anything for which a patent had been granted. And after paying the port and other charges to which she was subject by the treaty, the master would be met with a further demand, the amount of which was not even regulated by law, but depended upon the will of a private individual.

And it will be remembered that the demand, if well founded in the patent laws, could not be controlled or put aside by the treaty. For, by the laws of the United States, the rights of a party under a patent are his private property; and by the constitution of the United States, private property cannot be taken for public use without just compensation. And in the case I have stated, the government would be unable to carry into effect its treaty stipulations without the consent of the patentee, unless it resorted to its right of eminent domain, and went through the tedious and expensive process of condemning so much of the right of property of the patentee as related to foreign vessels, and paying him such a compensation therefor as should be awarded to him by the proper tribunal. The same difficulty would exist in executing a law of congress \* in relation to foreign ships and vessels trading to [\* 198] this country. And it is impossible to suppose that congress in passing these laws could have intended to confer on the



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patentee a right of private property, which would in effect enable him to exercise political power, and which the government would be obliged to regain by purchase, or by the power of its eminent domain, before it could fully and freely exercise the great power of regulating commerce, in which the whole nation has an interest. The patent laws were passed to accomplish a different purpose, and with an eye to a different object; and the right to interfere in foreign intercourse, or with foreign ships visiting our ports, was evidently not in the mind of the legislature, nor intended to be granted to the patentee.

Congress may unquestionably, under its power to regulate commerce, prohibit any foreign ship from entering our ports, which, in its construction or equipment, uses any improvement patented in this country, or may prescribe the terms and regulations upon which such vessels shall be allowed to enter. Yet it may perhaps be doubted whether congress could by law confer on an individual, or individuals, a right which would in any degree impair the constitutional powers of the legislative or executive departments of the government, or which might put it in their power to embarrass our commerce and intercourse with foreign nations, or endanger our amicable relations. But however that may be, we are satisfied that no sound rule of interpretation would justify the court in giving to the general words used in the patent laws the extended construction claimed by the plaintiff, in a case like this, where public rights and the interests of the whole community are concerned.

The case of *Caldwell v. Vlissengen*, (9 Hare, 416, 9 Eng. L. and Eq. Rep. 51,) and the statute passed by the British parliament in consequence of that decision, have been referred to and relied on in the argument. The reasoning of the vice chancellor is certainly entitled to much respect, and it is not for this court to question the correctness of the decision, or the construction given to the statute of Henry VIII.

But we must interpret our patent laws with reference to our own constitution and laws and judicial decisions. And the court are of opinion that the rights of property and exclusive use granted to a patentee does not extend to a foreign vessel lawfully entering one of our ports; and that the use of such improvement, in the construction, fitting out, or equipment of such vessel, while she is coming into or going out of a port of the United States, is not an infringement of the rights of an American patentee, provided it was placed upon her in a \* foreign port, and authorized by the laws of the country to which she belongs.

In this view of the subject, it is unnecessary to say anything in

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relation to the second plea of the defendant, since the matters relied on in the first are sufficient to bar the plaintiff of his action, without the aid of the additional averments contained in the second.

The judgment of the circuit court must therefore be affirmed.

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THE SCHOONER MARY EDDY.

MOSES C. MORDECAI and others, Appellants, v. LINDSAY and others.

19 H. 199.

PRACTICE ON APPEALS FROM DISTRICT TO CIRCUIT COURT, ALSO TO THIS COURT FROM CIRCUIT COURT.

1. The circuit court can have no jurisdiction of an appeal from the district court when there is not a final decree in the latter.
2. If the circuit court render a decree on the merits in such case, all that the court can do on appeal is to reverse the decree of the circuit court, with directions to that court to dismiss the appeal from the district court, that the latter may proceed to render a final decree.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the district of South Carolina.  
The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Phillips*, for appellants.

*Mr. Johnson* and *Mr. Reverdy Johnson, jr.*, for appellees.

\* Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 200 ]

This is an appeal from the circuit court of the United States for the district of South Carolina.

Upon the hearing of this cause in this court, it was suggested that the court had not jurisdiction of the case, on the ground that the district court, which had original jurisdiction of it, had not given a final decree in favor of the libellants, before the cause was taken by appeal to the circuit court; from the decision of which, reversing the decision of the district judge and dismissing the libel, the appellants appealed to the supreme court. No such decree of the district court is set out in the record; but the court, supposing it might be a clerical omission, gave to the counsel concerned in the cause time to ascertain the fact, in order that it might be made, either by consent of parties or by *certiorari*, a part of the record, that there might be no delay in the final disposition of the case by this court. The counsel having made the necessary inquiries

\* from the clerk of the district and circuit courts, and hav- [ \* 201 ]  
ing reported to this court that no final decree had been

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The Schooner Mary Eddy.

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extended or passed in favor of the libellants by the district judge, and that the case had been taken by appeal to the circuit court upon such imperfect record, and decided in that court, without any notice of the omission having been brought to its view either from the record or in the argument of the case, the counsel have applied to this court to permit them to amend the record by consent, by inserting in it what might be agreed upon by them to be a final decree, urging, as the merits of the case between the parties had been fully discussed here, that the court could proceed upon such amendment to decide the case.

We have examined the proposal of counsel in connection with the laws of congress regulating appeals from the district court to the circuit court, and from the latter to this court, and also the decisions of this court upon those laws, and we do not find, upon any interpretation which has been or could in our view be given to them, that it is in our power to grant the application of counsel for the amendment of the record, as they propose it should be done.

The right of appeal is "conferred, defined, and regulated," by the second section of the act of March 2, 1803, (ch. 20, 1 Stats. at Large, 244.) Its language is: "That from all final judgments or decrees in any of the district courts of the United States, an appeal, where the matter in dispute, exclusive of costs, shall exceed the sum or value of fifty dollars, shall be allowed to the circuit court next to be holden in the district where such judgment or judgments, decree or decrees, may be rendered; and the circuit court or courts are hereby authorized and required to receive, hear, and determine, such appeal. And that from all final judgments or decrees rendered in any circuit court, or in any district court acting as a circuit court in cases of equity, of admiralty, and maritime jurisdiction, and of prize or no prize, an appeal, where the matter in dispute, exclusive of costs, shall exceed the sum or value of two thousand dollars, shall be allowed to the supreme court of the United States; and that upon such appeal a transcript of the libel, bill, answer, depositions, and all other proceedings of what kind soever in the cause, shall be transmitted to the said supreme court." It is, then, only upon final judgments and decrees that appeals can be taken from either of the courts to the other courts. Without such a decree, neither the circuit nor the supreme courts can have jurisdiction to determine a cause upon its merits, as was done in this case by the circuit court, from which decision it has been brought by appeal to this court. The circuit court had nothing before it to [ \* 202 ] make \*its decision available for the appellants, if its view of the merits of the case had coincided with the opinion of

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the district judge, or upon which its process could have been issued to carry out the judgment given by it in favor of the respondents. Nor could it have permitted an amendment of the record of appeal by the insertion of what the parties might have agreed to be a final judgment as to amount, without its having first received the judicial sanction of the district judge. . And this court is as powerless in this respect as the circuit court was, as its jurisdiction depends upon that court having a proper legislative jurisdiction of the case. It cannot overlook the fact upon which its jurisdiction depends, *by any action in the case in the circuit court upon an irregular appeal*. The case in that court was *coram non judice*, and is so here. The appellants have the right to the execution of the order given by the district judge to the commissioner and clerk of the court, to ascertain the charges to be made against the respective parties to the suit, and to state an account between them; for which purpose he was authorized to use the testimony already reported, and such further testimony as might be brought before him in relation to that point. *That* the circuit court cannot direct to be done, nor can this court do so. All that we can do in the case, as it stands here, is to reverse the decree of the circuit court dismissing the appellants' libel, to send the case back to the circuit court, that the appeal in it may be dismissed by it for want of its jurisdiction, leaving the case in its condition before the appeal to that court, that the parties may carry out the case in the district court to a final decree, upon such a report as the commissioner and clerk may make, according to the order which was given by the judge. The judgment of the circuit court is reversed accordingly.

TERENCE COUSIN, Plaintiff in Error, v. FANNY LABATUT and others.

19 H. 202.

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181 ccxv

JURISDICTION ON ERROR TO STATE COURTS—EFFECT OF CONFIRMATION AND SURVEY OF SPANISH GRANTS.

1. Where the decision of the State court turned upon the construction and effect to be given to the acts of congress and of the officers executing them, and the decision is against the title set up under these, this court has power to review the judgment.
2. In the State courts of Louisiana, where bills of exception are unknown, and the opinions of the supreme court are by statute made part of the record, the opinion will be examined here, to learn what questions were decided.
3. By virtue of the acts of congress of 1819 (3 Stats. at Large, 528) and 1822, (*idem*, 707,) the register and receiver of the land office had a right to direct on what land a confirmation under the act of 1812 should be located.

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4. A survey made under the certificate of those officers in 1846 constituted a good title as against the United States, and a *prima facie* title against all persons.
5. But until the survey was made, the United States had the right to sell and convey the land to others; and a person who obtained the patent of the United States, prior to the survey in 1846, has the paramount title as to so much of the land in dispute as his patent covers.
6. As to all the land in dispute not covered by such patent, the certificate and survey are *prima facie evidence* of title, notwithstanding a supposed variance in the names of the parties under whom the original claim was made.

THIS was a writ of error to the supreme court of Louisiana.  
The case is clearly stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Janin*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for defendants.

[ \* 206 ] \* Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court.

Evariste Blanc sued Terence Cousin, in the eighth district court of Louisiana, invoking the aid of that court to settle a disputed boundary between the plaintiff and defendant.

Cousin, instead of responding to the action, for the purpose of settling boundary, filed an answer, denying Blanc's *title* to the property described in his petition, and setting up title in himself, and claiming damages against Blanc, who joined issue on the answer, and denied the validity of the title asserted by Cousin. This turned Cousin into a plaintiff, (as the State courts held,) and imposed on him the burden of proof to support his title. It was adjudged in the district court, on the documents presented by

Cousin, that he had no title whatever to any part of the  
[ \* 207 ] land in dispute; and so the supreme \* court of Louisiana  
held on an appeal to that court, where the cause was reheard.

Pending the appeal, Blanc died, and his widow and heirs were made parties. They prayed the benefit of the judgment of the court below, and also that it might be so amended by the supreme court as to give them the benefit of all that Blanc claimed in his petition—that is to say, 222.80 acres, according to certificate No. 1,280, showing a regular purchase from the United States; together with 1,240 arpents in superficies, according to a plan annexed to the original petition of Blanc; that they might be quieted in the possession thereof as owners, and that the 1,240 arpents may be bounded according to the plan. And to this effect the court gave judgment.

The laws of congress, and the acts of the officers executing them in perfecting titles to public lands, have been drawn in question,

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and construed by the decision of the supreme court of Louisiana in this case; and the decision being against the title set up by Cousin, under the acts of congress and the authority exercised under them, it follows that jurisdiction is vested in this court, by the 25th section of the judiciary act, to examine the judgment of the State court; and, in doing so, we refer to the opinion of that court, which is made part of the record by the laws of Louisiana, and is explanatory to the judgment, of which it is there deemed an essential part. We refer to the opinion, in order to show that questions did arise and were decided, as required, to give this court jurisdiction. (9 How. 9.) This is necessarily so in cases brought here by writ of error to the courts of Louisiana, because no bill of exceptions is necessary there, when appeals are prosecuted. The court of last resort acts on the law and facts as presented by the whole record.

By relying on this source of information, as to what questions were raised and were decided by the State court, we are relieved from all difficulty in this instance.

Cousin's claim is assumed to have originated in a Spanish order of survey laid before the proper commissioner appointed under the act of April 25, 1812, whose duty it was to receive notices and evidences of claims, which were ordered to be recorded by the commissioner. It was made the duty of the commissioner to report to the secretary of the treasury upon claims, and the evidences thereof, thus notified to him; which report the act directed should be laid before congress by the secretary.

In January, 1816, the report was transmitted by him to congress. By the act of March 3d, 1819, congress legislated in regard to the claims reported. By that act, two land \* districts [ \* 208 ] were established east of the island of New Orleans, and a register and receiver were provided for each.

The books of the former commissioners, in which the claims and evidences of claims were recorded, were directed to be lodged with the register; and the register and receiver were vested with power "to examine the claims recognized, confirmed, or provided to be granted," by the provisions of that act; they were instructed to make out, for each claimant entitled in their opinion thereto, a certificate, according to the nature of the case, pursuant to the instructions of the commissioner of the general land office; and, on the presentation at that office of such certificate, a patent was ordered to be issued. Francis Cousin's claim was within the above description.

As no provision was made by the act of 1819, vesting authority



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in the register and receiver to direct in what manner confirmed claims should be located and surveyed, it was (sec. 11) left to the deputies of the principal surveyor south of Tennessee to find the lands, and survey them according to their own judgment. Then, again, the surveyors had no authority to adjust conflicting boundaries, and therefore further legislation was deemed necessary; and accordingly the act of June 8, 1822, was passed by congress, giving the registers and receivers power to direct the manner in which claims should be located and surveyed, (sec. 4,) and power was also given to them to decide between parties whose claims conflicted.

In June, 1820, the register and receiver gave Cousin a certificate of confirmation under the act of 1819. They certify "that claim No. 255 in the report of the commissioner, marked B, claimed by Francis Cousin, original claimant Stephen René, is confirmed as a donation, and entitled to a patent for one thousand arpents, situated in St. Tammany, and claimed under an order of survey dated 10th September, 1798."

No Spanish survey was found, to aid the foregoing description.

In 1826, the register and receiver made an order of survey, as follows:

*"Land Office, St. Helena.*

"FRANCIS COUSIN, CERTIFICATE No. 178, DATED JUNE 8TH, 1820.

"Francis Cousin claims a tract of one thousand arpents of land, situate in the parish of St. Tammany, as purchaser from his father, Francis Cousin, deceased, who bought it from Louis Blanc, who bought it from the original owner, Gabriel Bertrand, and in virtue of certificate No. 178, dated 8th June, 1820, and signed Charles S. Cosby, register, and Fulwer Skipwith, receiver, in which certificate it is alleged by this claimant that it is erroneously set forth that

Stephen René was the original claimant; it appearing [ \* 209 ] that this tract of land is \* fronting on Bayou la Liberté, bounded below by the tract of land of Mr. Girod, and above by a tract of land belonging to claimant.

"It is ordered that this claim be located and surveyed with a front extending on said bayou, from the land of said Girod to that of claimant above, and from these points on the bayou to run back for quantity."

The supreme court of Louisiana held the certificate of 1820 so vague as not to be of any value, and pronounced it void. Furthermore, that the second one of 1826 departed from the confirmation, and was also invalid. The first purported to be for land derived

from Stephen René, as original claimant; and the second, for land of which Gabriel Bertrand was the original owner.

The act of 1822 is a supplement to the act of 1819; when taken together, they gave the register and receiver authority to declare what land had been confirmed, and how it should be surveyed. Now, if it be true, as is held by the State court, that the certificate of 1820 is so vague as to be of no value and void, then it follows, that another could be made in 1826 which would be certain in its description of the land confirmed, accompanied by an order of survey. Whether René or Bertrand once claimed the land, is immaterial. The confirmation is an incipient United States title, conferred on Cousin, which our government, in its political capacity, reserved to itself the power to locate by survey, and to grant by the acts of its executive officers; with which acts the courts of justice have no jurisdiction to interfere. (16 How. 403, 414.)

It rested with the register and receiver to ascertain the location of the land confirmed to Cousin, from the evidences of claim recorded and filed with the register; and having decided where and how the land should be located and surveyed, the courts of justice cannot reverse that decision; the power of revision is vested in the commissioner of the general land office.

It is proper here to say, we do not hold that the certificate of 1820 was void, because it was too vague to authorize a survey of the land. It established the *fact* that Cousin's claim was one of those described in the act of 1819, which had been confirmed. The act of 1822 was remedial; its main object was to confer power on the register and receiver to amend vague descriptions; so vague that patents could not issue on them, as required by the act of 1819.

The amendment was effectually made in this instance by the order of survey of 1826; and, when the survey was executed according to that order, the United States government \*was bound by it until it was set aside at the general [\* 210] land office.

The act of March 3, 1831, authorized a surveyor general to be appointed for the State of Louisiana, whose duty it was to cause confirmed claims to be surveyed; and the registers and receivers were again empowered (sec. 6) to decide in cases of contested boundaries, and consequently to control the surveys. On the 22d December, 1846, the official survey (accompanied by a plat) of the claim of Francis Cousin, was approved at the surveyor general's office. This is known as Vanzandt's survey, and is the one relied on by Cousin in his defense. A copy thereof, duly certified as a record of the surveyor general's office, is found in the record; and

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which copy the act of 1831 (sec. 5) declares shall be admitted as evidence in the courts of justice.

The act of 1831 (sec. 6) further declares (as respects interfering claims) "that the decisions of the register and receiver, and the surveys and patents that may be issued in conformity thereto, shall not in anywise be considered as precluding a legal investigation and decision by the proper judicial tribunals between the parties to any such interfering claims, but shall only operate as a relinquishment on the part of the United States of all title to the land in question." The foregoing reservation applies here; Cousin's survey extended in depth, from Bayou Liberté, so as to include 222.80 acres of land, which had been purchased of the United States by Francis Alpuente, and on the 4th of March, 1844, (before Cousin's survey was made,) duly conveyed to the plaintiff, Blanc, as part of of the succession of Alpuente.

Title to this land is claimed by Cousin by force of his confirmation, rendered certain by his survey of 1846; and which claim was rejected by the supreme court of Louisiana, when they rejected Cousin's title as set up.

We are of opinion that Cousin's title had no standing in a court of justice until the land was surveyed, and the survey approved as a proper one at the surveyor general's office; and that therefore the United States could lawfully sell the land, and give title to Alpuente. (8 How. 306.) The mere loose *order* of survey, made in 1826, by the register and receiver, cannot be recognized in this case as conferring any vested interest, as against Alpuente, to the 222.80 acres purchased by him; and to this extent the decision of the supreme court of Louisiana is proper. But as respects all other parts of Cousin's survey, it furnishes *prima facie* evidence of title in him, subject to be contested by the opposing title of Blanc, if he has any by prescription or otherwise.

[ \* 211 ] \* We order that the judgment be reversed, and the cause remanded to the supreme court of Louisiana, to be further proceeded in.

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HARTSHORN and HAYWARD, Plaintiffs in Error, v. HORACE H. DAY.

19 H. 211.

ASSIGNMENT OF PATENTS—IMPEACHING SEALED INSTRUMENTS FOR FRAUD—RESCISSION OF DAMAGES FOR BREACH OF COVENANT IN A CONTRACT.

1. A patentee may make a valid contract for the sale or assignment of his patent before it issues; also of a renewal.
2. A contract by which the patentee transfers his interest in the patent for several

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considerations, one of which is an annuity to be paid him by the transferee, cannot be rescinded by the patentee, on his own motion, for a failure to pay the annuity, where he has left that payment to rest on the personal covenant of the other party. In such case his remedy is by an action for damages on that covenant.

3. Fraud in the *execution* of an instrument, sealed or unsealed, may be set up to impeach it in a court of law.
4. But a sealed instrument, or a judgment of a court of law, can only be impeached for fraud in its consideration by a direct proceeding in chancery, where all proper parties and just remedies can be administered, and not in a court of law, where it is introduced collaterally as evidence.

THIS was a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Rhode Island.

The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. O' Connor* and *Mr. Brady*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Richardson*, *Mr. Jenckes*, and *Mr. Gillett*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 217 ]

This is a writ of error to the judgment of the circuit court of the United States, holden by the district judge in and for the district of Rhode Island.

The action was brought by Day against the defendants below, for an alleged infringement of a patent for the preparation and application of India rubber to cloths, granted to E. M. Chaffee, August 31, 1836, and renewed for seven years from the 31st August, 1850. The plaintiff claimed to be the assignee of the patent from Chaffee. The defendants sought to protect themselves under a license derived from Charles Goodyear, whom they insisted was the owner, and not Day, of the renewed patent. Goodyear became the owner of the unexpired term of the original patent on the 28th July, 1844, and on the same day granted to certain persons, called "The Shoe Associates," the exclusive use of all his improvements in the manufacture of India rubber, patented, or to be patented, during the term of any patents or renewals which he might own, or in which he might be interested, "so far as the same are, or may be, applicable to the manufacture of boots and shoes."

The defendants claimed a license under the Shoe Associates.

Chaffee, the original patentee, made application to the commissioner of patents, the 22d May, 1850, for the renewal of his patent, in which he states that the then present owners were willing and desirous that it should be renewed, and in \* that [ \* 218 ] event that they ought to make him further compensation for the invention. And on the next day, 23d May, 1850, he entered into an agreement with Goodyear, in which he stipulated to

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convey to him the patent, on its renewal for the extended term, in consideration of three thousand dollars.

There seems to have been some agreement or understanding that the then owners of the patent, and their licensees, should be at the expense of the renewal.

William Judson had become interested in one-eighth of the patent in 1846, by an assignment from Goodyear; and in 1848 he, in conjunction with Seth P. Staples, was appointed by Goodyear his attorney and agent, in taking out, renewing, extending, and defending his patents; and a fund was provided by Goodyear for defraying the expenses of these proceedings, and placed in the hands of Judson. By the consent of Goodyear, Judson subsequently became his sole agent and trustee of the fund for the purposes mentioned.

The patent was renewed, in pursuance of the application, on the 30th August, 1850. Soon after this renewal, to wit, on the 5th September, 1850, an agreement was entered into between Chaffee and Judson, which recites the renewal, and that the expenses were large, and also that at the time of the renewal the patent was held by Goodyear for the benefit of himself and his licensees; and, further, that he had agreed with Chaffee, for himself and those using the patent under him, that they would be at the expense of the extension, and make an allowance to him, Chaffee, of \$1,200 per annum, payable quarterly, during the period of the extension; and reciting also that Judson had had the management of the application for the renewal, and had paid, and became liable to pay, the expenses thereof, and had agreed to guaranty the payment of the annuity of \$1,200; and the agreement then provided as follows: "Now, I (Chaffee) do hereby, in consideration of the premises, and to place my patent so that in case of my death, or other accident or event, it may enure to the benefit of said Charles Goodyear, and those who hold a right to the use of said patent, under and in connection with his licensees, according to the understanding of the parties interested, nominate, constitute, and appoint said William Judson my trustee and attorney, irrevocable, to hold said patent, and have the control thereof, so as no one shall have a license to use said patent or invention, or the improvements secured thereby, other than those who had a right to use the same when said patent was extended, without the written consent of said Judson first had and obtained."

At the close of the agreement, Judson stipulates with  
[ \* 219 ] \* Chaffee to pay all the expenses of the renewal, and also the annuity of \$1,200; and also to be at all the expense

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of sustaining and defending the patent; and Chaffee reserves to himself the right to use the improvement in his own business.

This contract was entered into without the privity of Goodyear, and changed materially the terms and conditions of that made by him with Chaffee on the 23d May. He was at first dissatisfied with the change when it came to his notice, but afterwards acquiesced.

The contract continued in operation down to the 12th November, 1851, when a modification of the same took place.

This last contract recites that there was an omission in that of 6th September, in not stating that if the said licensees continued to use the improvements, they should pay their just proportion of the expenses and services in obtaining the renewal, which it was intended they should pay to Judson; and recites also that there was no stipulation on the part of Judson to pay Chaffee \$1,500 per annum, as claimed by him; and it is then agreed that the licensees shall pay their share of the expenses to Judson as a condition to the granting of a license by him to them; and that, on the payment of such share of the expenses, a license shall be granted to them. And it was further agreed, that Judson should pay Chaffee the \$1,500 per annum; and also that Judson might use Chaffee's name in the prosecution of infringements of the patent, or for any other purpose in relation to the use of it, he holding Chaffee harmless from all costs, &c., and he, Judson, to have all the benefits to be derived from said suits.

It will be perceived that the only provision in this agreement differing from that of 6th September, in which Chaffee has any interest, is the one providing for an annuity of \$1,500, instead of the \$1,200. All the other provisions are for the benefit of Judson. This annuity was paid down to the 1st December, 1852, when some difficulty arose between Judson and Chaffee, and the payment ceased.

And on the 1st July thereafter, Chaffee undertook, in consequence of this default, to revoke and annul the power and control of Judson over the patent, and to forbid his acting in any way or manner under the agreements of the 6th September, and of the 12th November, above referred to. And on the same day, for the consideration of \$11,000, assigned the renewed patent to Day, the plaintiff in this suit. Day, on the 2d July, 1853, gave notice to Judson of the assignment, offering to pay, at the same time, all sums there might be due him, if any there were, for moneys advanced in procuring the extension of the patent, or in any other way paid for Chaffee on \*account of said patent. [ \* 220 ]

The above is the substance of the case, as appears from the



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written agreements of the parties in the record. The questions involved turn essentially upon the points:

1. As to the operation and effect to be given to the three agreements which have been referred to, and especially of that of the 6th September, 1850, between Chaffee and Judson; and

2. The force and effect of the attempted rescindment of these agreements by Chaffee, on the 1st July, 1853, on account of the neglect or refusal of Judson to pay the annuity of \$1,500.

1. It is not important to examine particularly the agreement between Goodyear and Chaffee of 23d May, as that was, in effect, superseded by the one entered into with Judson, the 6th of September, to which Goodyear afterwards assented.

It is important only as leading to the latter agreement, and may therefore assist in explaining its provisions.

By this first agreement, Chaffee bound himself to assign to Goodyear the renewed patent, as soon as it was obtained, for the consideration of \$3,000. Goodyear became thus equitably entitled to the entire interest in the patent during the extended term, and could have invested himself with the legal title on the payment, or offer to pay the three thousand dollars, had he not subsequently acquiesced in the modification of it with Judson. Judson was the owner, jointly with Goodyear, of one-eighth of the patent. He was also the agent and attorney of Goodyear, generally, in his applications for patents, in obtaining renewals, and in the litigation growing out of the business; and was the trustee of a fund provided by Goodyear to meet the expenses. It was, doubtless, on account of this interest of Judson in the improvement, and his general authority from Goodyear in the management of his patent concerns, that led him to enter into the new arrangement with Chaffee, of the 6th September, in the absence of his principal. Goodyear might have repudiated it, and insisted upon the fulfillment of the first agreement. He thought fit, however, after a full knowledge of the facts, to acquiesce; and his rights, therefore, and those claiming under him, must depend upon this second agreement.

In respect to this agreement, whether the title which passed from Chaffee, in the renewed patent to Judson, was legal or equitable, the court is of opinion that the entire interest and ownership in the same passed to him for the benefit of Goodyear, and those holding rights and licenses under him. The instrument [ \* 221 ] is very inartificially drawn, but the intent and \* object of it cannot be mistaken. Chaffee, in consideration of the premises, which included the annuity of \$1,200, "and (in his own language) to place my (his) patent so that in case of death, or

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other accident or event, it (the patent) may enure to the benefit of said Charles Goodyear, and those who hold a right to the use of said patent, under and in connection with his licensees,' &c., nominates and appoints "said William Judson, my trustee and attorney irrevocable, to hold said patent, and have the control thereof, so that no one shall have a license, &c., other than those who had a right to use the same when said patent was extended, without the written consent of said Judson;" and at the close of the agreement, he reserves the right to use the improvement in his own business. At this time, as we have seen, Judson was the owner of one-eighth of the patent, and was the general agent and attorney of Goodyear in all his patent business transactions. It is apparent that the only interest in the patent, left in Chaffee, was the right reserved for his own personal use. The annuity and indemnity against the expenses of the renewal were the compensation received by him for parting with the improvement. The contract of the 12th November has no material bearing upon this part of the case. Most of the provisions were for the benefit of Judson, in relation to the licensees under Goodyear. The only provision important to Chaffee is the stipulation for the increased annuity of \$1,500.

2. Then, as to the attempted rescindment of the contracts. The agreement of 6th September had been in force from its date down to the 1st July, 1853, a period of two years and nearly ten months. During all this time, the licensees of Goodyear, at the date of the renewal of the patent, and those whom Judson may have granted a license to since the renewal, had a right to use the improvement, and especially the Shoe Associates, referred to in their agreement with Goodyear, 1st July, 1848. Besides this stipulation with Goodyear, their right was expressly recognised by Chaffee himself, in the agreement with Judson of 6th of September.

The effect of the rescindment as claimed, and which would be necessary to enable the plaintiff to succeed in his action against the defendants, would be to break up the business of these licensees, by divesting them of their rights under this agreement—rights acquired under it from all parties connected with or concerned in the patent, and especially from Chaffee, the patentee, who placed it in the hands of Judson, for the benefit of Goodyear and those holding under him. The effect would also be to deprive Goodyear or Judson, or whichever of them had paid the expenses of obtaining the renewal, of the \*equivalent for those [ \* 222 ] expenses, except as they might have a personal remedy against Chaffee. To the extent above stated, the agreement of the

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6th September was already executed, and, in respect to parties concerned, the abrogation would work the most serious consequences.

As we have already said, the ground upon which the right to put an end to the agreement is the refusal to pay the annuity of \$1,500 after December, 1852. Judson proposed to Chaffee to resume the payment in June, 1853, which was declined; but we attach no importance to this fact, especially as we are in a court of law. But, in looking into the agreements of the 6th of September, and also the one of the 12th of November, the court is of opinion that the payment of the annuity was not a condition to the vesting of the interest in the patent in Judson, and of course that the omission or refusal to pay did not give to Chaffee a right to rescind the contract, nor have the effect to remit him to his interest as patentee. The right to the annuity rested in covenant, under the agreement of the 12th of November. One of the objects of that agreement was, to obtain from Judson this covenant. From the terms and intent of the agreement, the remedy for the breach could rest only upon the personal obligation of Judson, as, by the previous one of the 6th of September, the interest in the patent had passed to Goodyear and his licensees, and no default or act of Judson could affect them. Chaffee chose to be satisfied with the covenant of Judson, without stipulation or condition as it respected the other parties, and he must be content with it.

The cases of *Brooks v. Stolly*, (3 McLean, 526,) and *Woodworth v. Weed*, (1 Blatchford, 165,) have no application to this case.

The attempt to rescind the contracts, being thus wholly inoperative and void, in the opinion of the court, of course no interest in the patent passed to Day, under the assignment of the 1st July, 1853.

Evidence was given on the trial in the court below, for the purpose of proving that the agreement of the 6th of September was procured from Chaffee by the fraudulent representations of Judson, which was objected to, but admitted.

The general rule is, that in an action upon a sealed instrument in a court of law, failure of consideration, or fraud in the consideration, for the purpose of avoiding the obligation, is not admissible as between parties and privies to the deed; and, more especially, where there has been a part execution of the contract. The difficulties are in adjusting the rights and equities of the parties in a court of law; and hence, in the States where the two [ \* 223 ] systems of jurisprudence prevail, of \* equity and the common law, a court of law refuses to open the question of fraud in the consideration, or in the transaction out of which the

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consideration arises, in a suit upon the sealed instrument, but turns the party over to a court of equity, where the instrument can be set aside upon such terms as, under all the circumstances, may be equitable and just between the parties. A court of law can hold no middle course; the question is limited to the validity or invalidity of the deed.

Fraud in the execution of the instrument has always been admitted in a court of law, as where it has been misread, or some other fraud or imposition has been practiced upon the party in procuring his signature and seal. The fraud in this aspect goes to the question whether or not the instrument ever had any legal existence. (2 J. R. 177; 13 Ib. 430; 5 Cow. 506; 4 Wend. 471; 6 Munf. 358; 2 Rand. 426; 10 S. and R. 25; 14 Ib. 208; 1 Alab. 100; 7 Misso. 424; 4 Dev. and Bat. 436; C. and H. Notes, part 2, p. 615, note 306, ed. Gould & Banks, 1850.)

It is said that fraud vitiates all contracts, and even records, which is doubtless true in a general sense. But it must be reached in some regular and authoritative mode; and this may depend upon the forum in which it is presented, and also upon the parties to the litigation. A record of judgment may be avoided for fraud, but not between the parties or privies in a court of law.

The case in hand illustrates the impropriety and injustice of admitting evidence of fraud to defeat agreements of the character in question in a court of law. We have a record before us of 1,055 closely-printed pages of evidence submitted to the jury, and a trial of the duration of some six weeks. Goodyear and his licensees had acquired vested and valuable rights under the agreements in this patent, and who were in no way privy to, or connected with, the alleged fraud, nor parties to this suit; and yet it is assumed, and without the assumption the fraud would be immaterial, that the effect of avoiding the agreements would be to abrogate these rights. They had been in the enjoyment of them for nearly three years, and may have invested large amounts of capital in the confidence of their validity. They were derived from Chaffee himself, the patentee of the improvement. A court of equity, on an application by him to set aside the agreements on the ground of fraud, would have required that these third parties in interest should have been made parties to the suit, and would have protected their rights, or secured them against loss, if it interfered at all, upon the commonest principles of equity jurisprudence.

\* Some slight evidence was given in the court below, [\* 224] upon the question whether the agreement of the 6th of September was sealed at the time of the execution. But the instru-

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ment produced was sealed, and is recited in the subsequent agreement of the 12th November, as an agreement signed and sealed by the parties.

A question was also made, as to the authority of the Shoe Associates to grant a license to the defendants. But they held under Goodyear the right to the exclusive use of the improvement for the manufacture of boots and shoes. They were competent, therefore, to confer the right upon the defendants. Besides, the point is not material in the view the court have taken of the case, as upon that view no interest in the patent vested in the plaintiff under the assignment from Chaffee.

It will be seen, by a reference to the bill of exceptions, that upon our conclusions in respect to several points raised in the case, the rulings in the court below were erroneous, and consequently the judgment must be reversed, and a *venire de novo* awarded.

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HORATIO N. SLATER, Plaintiff in Error, v. CHARLES EMERSON.

19 H. 224.

DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT COVENANTS.

1. By the contract sued on the plaintiff agreed to complete certain work by the 1st of December, and the defendant agreed, when the work was completed, to give him notes for \$10,000, payable six months thereafter: Held, that the completion of the work at the time specified was a condition precedent to the right to the notes.
2. Parol evidence of the necessity of completion of the work at the time, held to have weight in determining whether the covenants were dependent or independent.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the district of Massachusetts.  
The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Bates* and *Mr. Bartlett*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Hutchins* and *Mr. Choate*, for defendant.

[ \* 233 ] \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.  
This case is before us on a writ of error to the circuit court of Massachusetts.

The action was brought by Emerson against Slater on an agreement made the 14th day of November, 1854, in which Emerson, "in consideration of the agreement of said Slater,  
[ \* 234 ] \* hereinafter contained, and of one dollar to him paid, covenants and agrees, with said Slater, that he will complete all the bridge work to be done by him for the Boston and New

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York Central Railroad Company, ready for laying down the iron rails for one track, by the 1st day of December next."

"And the said Slater, in consideration of the premises, hereby agrees, with said Emerson, that he will pay him, within two days from the date hereof, the sum of forty-four hundred dollars, in cash. And the said Slater further agrees, that he will give to the said Emerson, on the completion of the bridges, and when the rails for one track are laid to the foot of Summer street, in Boston, from Dedham, his (said Slater's) five notes, for two thousand dollars each, dated when said notes were given, as above provided, and payable in six months from their date, to the said Emerson or his order. Said notes, when paid, are to be applied towards the indebtedness of said Boston and New York Central Railroad Company to said Emerson; it being understood that this agreement is in no way to affect any contract of said Emerson with said company, or any action now pending."

The execution of this agreement was admitted, and that the work upon the bridges, in said agreement set forth, was completed, ready for laying down the iron rails for one track, about the middle of December, 1854, and that the rails were laid to the foot of Summer street, in Boston, from Dedham, about the last of the same month.

It was proved that the defendant was president of the Boston and New York Central Railroad Company, and a stockholder and bondholder in the same. The corporation failed on or about the 2d of July, 1854. The company was then indebted to the plaintiff, and did not pay him. In the second week of July there was a crisis in the affairs of the company, and Emerson suspended his work, so far as regarded new outlays. In August a new arrangement was made, and he went on till the first or second week in November, and then he kept a force on the great bridges sufficient to retain possession of the work, and would not surrender it; the witness (Willis) then made an effort to get the bridges completed. The question was, how much Emerson would take. The company owed him some ten to fifteen thousand dollars, and was then insolvent as respected meeting its engagements.

The defendant then introduced an agreement between the Boston and New York Central Railroad Company, a corporation, and Charles Emerson, of Boston, in which Emerson agreed to build and complete, sufficient for the passage of an engine over the same, on or before the first day of May next, \*all the [ \* 235 ] bridging as now laid out and determined upon by the engineer of said railroad, from the wharf near the foot of Summer street, in Boston, and from South Boston across the South Bay, so



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called, to the Dorchester shore, in Dorchester, in the manner and with the materials hereinafter described, and to finally complete the same to the satisfaction of the State commissioner and the engineers of said railroad, as soon after the first day of May next as may be. Several other bridges were required to be built on the road, Emerson furnishing all the materials, excepting the iron rails, chains, and spikes, which were to be furnished by the railroad company. This contract was dated the 23d of December, 1853, and signed by the parties.

A receipt, dated November 15th, 1854, signed by Emerson, acknowledged the payment of forty-four hundred dollars, by Slater, on the contract first above stated.

E. B. Ammidown, a witness, stated he was a director on the railroad, and that in November, 1854, there were negotiations pending for a contract for a through route from Boston to New York, between the Boston and New York Central Railroad Company and the Norwich and Worcester Railroad Company, and the steamboat company plying between Norwich and New York. The contract then existing between said steamboat company and Norwich and Worcester Railroad Company with the Boston and Worcester Railroad Company would expire about December 1st, 1854. It was necessary that said steamboat and Norwich and Worcester Railroad Companies should make a new contract. They preferred to contract with us instead of the Boston and Worcester Railroad Company, provided our road could be ready to run by December 1st, 1854. The only part of our road, as to which there was any doubt of its completion, was the bridges, which the plaintiff was making. The whole matter was talked over, in the presence of the plaintiff. We regarded it as of very great importance. I considered the loss of that contract equal to a quarter of a million of dollars, and the plaintiff said half a million. Committees from Norwich and Worcester Railroad and steamboat companies came on, to make the arrangement, and went over part of the road. Whether this was before or after the contract the witness cannot say, but he has little doubt that it was before.

J. C. Hurd, a witness, and who was also a director, and as a committee, about the 14th of August, 1854, made a parol contract with Emerson to pay him \$17,000, and secure to him \$6,000 of

Farnum, with endorsements. A larger sum than \$17,000, [ \* 236 ] he thinks, was paid at the time of the contract. \* Emerson agreed to go on and finish the work, but he declined to sign a written agreement.

On the above evidence, the defendant moved the court to rule

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and instruct the jury, that by the true construction of said contract declared on, the plaintiff would not be entitled to recover without showing that the work was completed, ready for laying down the iron rails for one track, by the first day of December, 1854; but the court refused so to instruct the jury, and did instruct them that the agreement on the part of the defendant to give the notes in said agreement mentioned was not dependent on the completion of said work, ready for laying down said rails for one track, at the time limited by said contract. To which ruling and refusal the defendant excepted.

And the defendant further requested the court to rule and instruct the jury, that if the plaintiff failed to complete said work, ready for laying down said iron rails for one track, by the said first day of December, there was thereby a failure of the consideration of said contract, and the plaintiff would not be entitled to recover the amount claimed by him, or any part thereof; but the court refused so to instruct the jury. To which refusal the defendant excepted.

The judge having first called upon the defendant to offer evidence, if he saw fit, of any actual damage by him sustained by the non-performance of said work within the time limited by said contract; and the defendant declining to offer any such evidence, and admitting that no such damages were claimed by him in the suit, the court thereupon instructed the jury to deduct, from any sum they might find for the plaintiff, the sum of one dollar—as nominal damage, for the said non-performance of plaintiff. To which the defendant excepted.

The jury found for the plaintiff ten thousand one hundred and ninety-nine dollars.

The declaration contains four counts. The first one alleges the work was completed by the 1st of December, 1854; the second, on the 20th of December; third, the same time; the fourth, the same as the second, with an allegation that the defendant waived the time fixed for the work to be completed to the 20th of December.

This contract cannot be satisfactorily understood or construed without reference to the circumstances under which it was made. From the evidence, it appears that the work to be completed by the 1st of December was provided for by a previous contract, dated 17th December, 1851, in which the details and prices of the work were specially stated to be so constructed as to admit of an engine to run over it on or before \* the 1st of May en- [ \* 237 ] suing, and the whole to be completed as soon after that period as practicable.

The company, it seems, had become embarrassed, and were

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unable to make payment for the work as it progressed; still the contractor, Emerson, was unwilling to give up the contract, and retained a few hands in his employ on different parts of the work, so as to retain the possession of it.

Another fact to be noticed as important was, that if the road could be completed by the 1st of December, the company had an assurance that a contract could be made with the steamboat company plying between Norwich and New York, making a continuous line between Boston and New York. This was considered an object of great importance—equal, as was supposed by a witness, to a quarter of a million of dollars, and, as the plaintiff supposed, to half a million.

The defendant was president of the Boston and New York Central Railroad—a stockholder and a bondholder in the same; but it does not appear that he had any authority to bind the company, as he entered into the contract in his individual capacity.

Under these circumstances, the contract on which the action is prosecuted was made. It will be at once perceived there was a strong motive to have the work completed by the 1st of December ensuing, by all who had an interest in the Central railroad. The sum to be paid by Slater was not in addition to the price stipulated in the former contract, but in discharge of so much of that contract.

All these facts being admitted or undisputed, we will consider the language of the contract. It states "that the said Emerson, in consideration of the agreement of said Slater, hereinafter contained, and of one dollar to him paid, the receipt whereof is acknowledged, covenants and agrees with said Slater, that he, the said Emerson, will complete all the bridge work to be done by him for the Boston and Central Railroad Company, ready for laying down the iron rails for one track, by the 1st day of December next."

There is no ambiguity in this language. No one can misconstrue it. The work specified was to be completed by the 1st day of December. And the said Slater, "in consideration of the premises," that is, the completion of the work, "hereby agrees with said Emerson, that he will pay him, within two days from the date hereof, the sum of forty-four hundred dollars in cash; and the said Slater further agrees that he will give to the said Emerson, on the completion of the bridges, and when the rails for one track are laid to the foot of Summer street, in Boston, from Dedham, his [ \* 238 ] (said Slater's) five \* notes for two thousand dollars each, dated when said notes are given, as above provided, and payable in six months."

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The notes were to be given on the completion of the bridges, and when the rails for one track are laid to the foot of Summer street, in Boston; and from this it is argued that the covenants in the agreement are independent. Much is found in the opinions of courts and elementary writers in regard to dependent and independent covenants. And it is said, "where the acts stipulated to be done are to be done at different times, the stipulations are to be construed as independent of each other." This, as a general rule, is correct, but it is subject to the intention of the parties, as signified in the language of the contract. The great rule is to ascertain the intent of the parties from the language used.

The work was to be done by the 1st day of December; and Slater agreed to give his notes, payable in six months after the work was completed; the time of giving the notes, therefore, is referable to the time fixed for the completion of the work. In no just or legal sense can this language be held to enlarge the time limited in the contract.

It is said by some writers, that it is impossible to make time of the essence of the contract where damages may compensate for the delay. But this is not correct as a general proposition. And a more fit illustration of this can scarcely be found than the contract under consideration. The amount of compensation for the work is not increased or diminished by the new contract. The first contract stands in all its force, unaffected by the second, except that the payments made under the second shall be applied as a credit on the first. The obligation assumed by Emerson in the new contract was, to finish the work, as stated, by the 1st of December, in consideration that forty-four hundred dollars should be paid to him in two days, and notes given for ten thousand dollars on the completion of the work. Slater, having no other interest in the work than any other stockholder and bondholder of similar amounts, paid the forty-four hundred dollars, and agreed to give his individual notes for the ten thousand dollars. In this contract he stands in the relation of a surety, and can only be held responsible under his agreement.

That time was an essential part of this contract is clear from the circumstances under which it was made, and the intent of the parties, as expressed. The continuous line to New York was the strong motive to Slater, and that could be secured only by the completion of the work on or before the 1st of December.

The defendant prayed the court to instruct the jury that the \* plaintiff could not recover without showing the work [ \* 239 ] was completed, ready for laying down the iron rails for

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one track, by the 1st day of December, 1854, which the court refused to do. In this, we think, there was error. On a contract where time does not constitute its essence, there can be no recovery at law on the agreement, where the performance was not within the time limited. A subsequent performance and acceptance by the defendant will authorize a recovery on a *quantum meruit*.

It is difficult to perceive any satisfactory mode by which the defendant in the circuit court could recoup his damages for the failure of the plaintiff to perform in that action, or by bringing another suit. As a stock and bondholder, his damages would be remote and contingent. To ascertain the general damage of the company by the failure, and distribute that amount among the members of the company in proportion to their interests, would seem to be the proper mode; and this would be complicated, and not suited to the action of a jury.

The judgment of the circuit court is reversed, with costs.

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FREDERICK SCHUCHARDT and another, Appellants, v. WINTHROP S. BARBIDGE and others.

19 H. 239.

ADMIRALTY HAS NO JURISDICTION TO FORECLOSE A MORTGAGE.

1. This court reasserts the doctrine that the circuit court, sitting as an admiralty court, has no jurisdiction to foreclose or give other remedy on a mortgage. 17 Howard, 399; 21 Curtis, 572.
2. A libel in the circuit court against the proceeds of a vessel sold under an admiralty decree, to subject the proceeds to the satisfaction of a mortgage on the vessel, cannot be sustained.
3. A petition filed in that suit on a claim for remnants might give such relief as admiralty could give in the premises.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the southern district of New York, and the facts are stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Cutting* and *Mr. Hamilton*, for appellants.

*Mr. Benedict*, for appellees.

[ \* 240 ] \* Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the southern district of New York, sitting in admiralty.

Between sixty and seventy libels had been filed in the district court by material men—men who had furnished supplies; also, by

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shippers of goods and passengers—against the ship *Angelique*, of which S. W. Jones was master. These several proceedings were commenced in July and August, 1853, and interlocutory decrees, condemning the vessel, were entered in all of them, and final decrees in some six or seven. One of the parties obtaining a final decree, issued execution, and the vessel was sold, and the proceeds brought into court. The vessel sold for \$6,900.

In this stage of these proceedings, the present appellants filed their libel against the proceeds of the ship in court, setting forth, that, being the owners of the vessel, they sold and delivered her to one A. Pellitier, for the sum of \$15,000, on the 7th May, 1853; that of this sum a promissory note of the vendee was given for \$5,000, payable in six months, which was secured by a mortgage upon a moiety of the vessel to the vendors, which was duly recorded, in pursuance of the act of congress, on the 9th May, 1853, in the office of the collector of customs of the port of New York, where the vessel was then registered, and a copy of the mortgage was also filed in the office of the register of deeds of the city and county of New York.

The libel prayed process against a moiety of the proceeds of the vessel in court, claiming the same under, and by virtue of, the mortgage.

Several of the libellants, who had obtained either final or interlocutory decrees, above referred to, appeared, and put in \* answers to this libel of the mortgagees, setting up their [ \* 241 ] proceedings, and the decrees condemning the vessel to pay their respective claims to the proceeds, in defense.

The case went to a hearing, when the district court decreed to dismiss the libel. On an appeal, the circuit court affirmed the decree.

The libel filed in this case is a libel simply to foreclose a mortgage, or to enforce the payment of a mortgage, and the proceeding cannot therefore be upheld within the case of the *John Jay*, heretofore decided by this court. (17 How. 399.)

The proper course for the mortgagees was to have appeared as claimants to the libels filed against the vessel, in which the questions presented in the case might have been raised and considered; or, on the sale of the vessel, and the proceeds brought into the registry, they might have applied by petition, claiming an interest in the fund; and if no better right to it were shown than that under the mortgage, it would have been competent for the court to have appropriated it to the satisfaction of the claim. As the fund is in the custody of the admiralty, the application must necessarily be made to that court by any person setting up an interest in it.



## The Steamer Roanoke.

This application by petition is frequently entertained for proceeds in the registry, in cases where a suit in the admiralty would be wholly inadmissible. The decree of the court below is therefore right, and should be affirmed.

## THE STEAMER ROANOKE.

THE NEW YORK AND VIRGINIA STEAMSHIP COMPANY, Appellants, v.  
EZRA CALDERWOOD and others.

19 H. 241.

## COLLISION—STEAMBOAT AND SCHOONER.

Neither rain, nor the darkness of the night, nor the absence of a light from a barge or sailing vessel, nor the fact that the steamer was well manned and furnished, and conducted with caution, will excuse the steamer for coming in collision with the barge or sailing vessel, where the latter is at anchor, or sailing in a thoroughfare, out of the usual track of the steam vessel.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the southern district of New York, and the case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Van Winkle*, for appellants.

*Mr. Benedict*, for appellees.

[ \* 245 ] \* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a case of collision, in which the steamship Roanoke is charged with having carelessly and negligently run into and afoul of the schooner Sprightling Sea, in the Elizabeth river, Virginia, in October, 1852.

The facts disclosed by the pleadings and proofs are, that the schooner was ascending the river between 10 and 11 o'clock, p. m., and sailing at a rate of six miles per hour, with the aid of the tide. She was close-hauled, on her starboard tack, at a time when she descried the steamship descending the river, on her voyage to Richmond. The collision occurred on the eastern side of the river, "out of the ship channel," "near an edge of shoals," and "within a length or two of them." The object of those who managed the schooner was to avoid all danger, by leaving as large a space as possible for the steamer, whose lights had been seen. For this purpose, they approached as nearly as possible the eastern shore—the usual shore, for vessels navigated as she was, to ascend the river. The schooner did not carry a light in her fore-rigging; but one was exhibited from her breast-hook some time before and till the time of the collision; and the steamer was hailed, and told to keep off.

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The night was "dark and rainy;" the steamer was not running at any time at an improper rate of speed. The officers of the steamship discovered the light on the schooner, and supposed it to belong "to a vessel at anchor;" but they say the "light disappeared, and the next time they saw it, it was near by, under the bow of the steamer." The probability is, that the officers of the steamship were mistaken in their \*conclusions in refer- [\* 246] ence to the course of the schooner, and under that mistaken impression went to the eastern side, and thus encountered her. No orders were given by the pilot in respect to the management of the steamer till the instant of the collision.

This court has decided that neither rain, nor the darkness of the night, nor the absence of a light from a barge or sailing vessel, nor the fact that the steamer was well manned, and furnished, and conducted with caution, will excuse the steamer for coming in collision with the barge or sailing vessel, where the barge or sailing vessel is at anchor, or sailing in a thoroughfare, out of the usual track of the steam vessel. In the present instance, the steamer had notice that a vessel was before her, and was near her track, and, under the circumstances, she was bound to take efficient measures to avoid the schooner.

The only facts we notice in the management of the schooner, which have occasioned a hesitation to affirm the decree, are the absence of a licensed pilot, and that the schooner did not exhibit an efficient light. The proofs in the case do not allow us to charge these omissions as indications of negligence; but, that the case may not be misunderstood, we assert that the ruling principle of the court is, that an obligation rests upon all vessels found in the avenues of commerce to employ active diligence to avoid collisions, and that no inference can be drawn from the fact, that a vessel is not condemned for an omission of certain precautionary measures in one case, that another vessel will be excused, under other circumstances, for omissions of the same description.

The decree of the circuit court is affirmed.

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WESLEY WILLIAMS, Plaintiff in Error, v. HILL, McLANE & Co.

19 H. 246.

GARNISHEE PROCESS.

1. Where the person garnished admits a surplus in his hands, after a sale under a trust deed, and satisfaction of the trust, if he claims to hold it for a debt of his own against the judgment debtor, he must establish the justice of his claim.

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2. Where issue is taken on an answer to a garnishee process, which sets up such a claim, it is a question for the jury to decide, whether the claim is just and fair, or fraudulent, and no presumptions arise in favor of the garnishee.

THIS is a writ of error to the district court for the middle district of Alabama, and the case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Phillips*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Hilliard*, for defendant.

[ \* 249 ] \* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

The defendants recovered a judgment in the district court, in a plea of debt against one Mahone. The latter having no property in possession liable to an execution, the defendants, in consequence, served a garnishment on the plaintiff, (Williams,) to attach any debt he might owe their debtor, or secure any effects of theirs he might have.

The garnishee answered to the process, that on the day the writ of garnishment issued, he had sold some personal property [ \* 250 ] \* of the debtor, under the authority of two deeds of trust, for the satisfaction of the debts described in them; and there remaining a balance due, he sold a house and lot, described in one of the deeds, for a sum sufficient to extinguish those debts and to leave a surplus. He further answered that Mahone, prior to the judgment, was indebted to him upon another account, and had so continued a debtor till the sale; that before the judgment, and afterwards, before the sale, Mahone had instructed him to apply any surplus that might arise from the sale to the payment of that account; and he had done so, in accordance with the instructions.

There was an issue formed upon the answer of the garnishee, and the subject of the controversy was the claim of the respective parties to the surplus above described.

The garnishee produced on the trial a number of promissory notes, dated prior to the judgment, and proved the signature of Mahone to them; he also proved that Mahone had admitted the authority of the garnishee to apply the surplus to the payment of his demands, not described in the deeds, shortly after the sale, and at that time disclaimed any power to control it. No evidence was given of the existence of the notes of a day prior to the answer, nor of their consideration. The defendants proved a conversation between their attorney and the garnishee, on the day of the sale, relative to the amount of the debt from Mahone to him, and that the notes were not mentioned by him in that conversation. The court instructed the jury that the inquiry for them was, whether there was fraud

or collusion between the garnishee and the debtor. That if they found that the notes were made in fraud or collusion, they would render a verdict in favor of the attaching creditors, for the amount of the surplus in the hands of the garnishee. This charge includes the substance of all the questions presented to the court or jury.

We think the case was submitted as favorably for the garnishee as the facts warranted, and that he has no reason to complain in consequence of the instructions given or refused.

The plaintiff is not entitled to hold the surplus in his hands arising from the sale of the trust property, for the payment of the notes, under any stipulation in the deeds. *Those* provide for a return of the surplus to the grantor, after the payment of the debts described. Nor can the real property conveyed in the deed be retained as a security for advances, or debts subsequently made on the strength of a parol engagement. Such a contract would be avoided by the statute of frauds. Nor is the deed of trust such a conveyance or title paper as to afford a security, as a deposit, for subsequent engagements.

\*In *Ex parte Hooper*, (1 Meri. Ch. R. 7,) Lord Eldon [ \* 251 ] said: "The doctrine of equitable mortgage by deposit of title deed has been too long established to be now disputed; but it may be said that it ought never to have been established. I am still more dissatisfied with the principle upon which I have acted, of extending the original doctrine so as to make the deposit a security for subsequent advances. At all events, the doctrine is not to be enlarged. In the present case, the legal estate has been assigned, by way of mortgage. The mortgagee is not entitled to say this conveyance is a deposit, because the contract under which he holds it is a contract for conveyance only, and not for deposit."

The only other title that the garnishee has interposed against the claim of the attaching creditor is, that the debtor made a valid appropriation of the surplus arising from the sale, to the satisfaction of a *bona fide* demand of the garnishee against him, prior to the service of the garnishment. The principle adopted by the courts of Alabama for such cases is, that the adverse claimant for property or effects seized at the suit of a creditor by attachment or execution, must prove the *bona fides* of his claim, if it is derived from the debtor after the origin of the creditor's demand; and the declarations or acknowledgments of the debtor will not be received to support the title. The recitals in a deed or mortgage executed by him, or admissions made at the time of its execution, will not be received. (*Goodgame v. Cole*, 12 Ala. 77; *Nolen & Thompson v. Gwinn*, 16 Ala. 725.) Nor is the consideration of a note in favor

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of the claimant shown by the production of the note itself. (De Vendell v. Malone, 25 Ala. 272.) The objection to such evidence is said to be, that it can be manufactured by one indebted, and by that means a creditor might be defeated; for, in most cases, it would not be practicable for him to prove a negative, or disprove the statement made by his debtor. In the present case, the consideration of the notes was not proved; nor was their existence before the service of the garnishment shown otherwise than by their date—that is, by an assertion of the debtor. Nor was the order to appropriate the surplus to their payment proved, except by an acknowledgment to a stranger, after the writ of garnishment had been issued.

The *bona fides* of the title of the garnishee to the surplus in his hands was not supported by competent proof, and therefore the lien of the garnishment was properly maintained.

The plaintiff contends that the proceeding by garnishment is a statutory proceeding, by which a creditor is enabled to reach a demand in favor of his debtor against a third person; [ \* 252 ] \*and that the remedy can only be resorted to when the debtor himself could maintain debt or *indebitatus assumpsit*; and that the only issue which can be made upon an answer of the garnishee is, *indebitatus vel non*. The supreme court of Alabama have decided, in the cases cited, that merely equitable demands or rights of action, not involving a debt or *assumpsit*, are not the subject of the garnishee process. But the same court has determined that money or effects in the hands of the garnishee, which are fraudulently withdrawn from the creditors of a defendant, may be reached, in an attachment or judgment, by that process. Hazard v. Franklin, 2 Ala. 349; Lovely v. Caldwell, 4 Ala. 684; and the civil code of Alabama, sec. 2,523, provides explicitly for the attachment of a demand similar to that existing in this case.

Judgment affirmed.

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JOHN BELL, Plaintiff in Error, v. COLUMBUS C. HEARNE and others.

19 H. 252.

ERROR TO STATE COURT—VALIDITY OF PATENT FOR LAND.

1. Where the question decided by the State court is, that a patent for land from the United States is invalid, the party claiming under that patent can bring a writ of error to this court.
2. Where the register and receiver of the land office received plaintiff's money, gave him the usual patent certificate, but by mistake reported it to the general land office as James Bell instead of John Bell, the patent issued to James Bell may be

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recalled and canceled, though it may have been sent to the register of the land office for him, but never delivered.

3. Such a patent conveys no title, and cannot affect the title under the patent afterwards rightfully issued to John Bell.

THIS was a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Louisiana.

The case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Baxter* and *Mr. Johnson*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Lawrence* and *Mr. Taylor*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 259 ]

This is a writ of error to the supreme court of Louisiana, under the 25th section of the judiciary act of September, 1789.

The plaintiff commenced a petitory action in the district court of Caddo parish, Louisiana, for a parcel of land in the possession of the defendants. He claims the land by a purchase from the United States, and exhibits their patent for it, bearing date in June, 1850, with his petition. The defendant (Hearne) appeared to the action, and answered that the United States had sold the land to James Bell, and as the property of James Bell it had been legally sold by the sheriff of Caddo, under a valid judgment and execution against him, and that a person under whom he (Hearne) derives his title was the purchaser at the sheriff's sale. A number of parties were cited in warranty, and answered to the same effect. A judgment was given for the defendants in the district and supreme courts; and upon the judgment in the last, the plaintiff prosecutes this writ of error.

The title of the plaintiff consists of the duplicate receipts of the receiver of the land office at Natchitoches, Louisiana, (No. 1,270,) dated in July, 1839, by which he acknowledges the receipt, from the plaintiff, of full payment for the lands described in the receipt and petition; a patent certificate, of the same date and number, from the register of that office, certifying \* the [ \* 260 ] purchase of the plaintiff, and his right to a patent; and a patent, issued in due form, for the said lands, in pursuance of the act of congress and the patent certificate.

The case of the defendants originates in these facts: The register of the land office at Natchitoches, in making up his duplicate certificate of purchase, to be returned to the general land office, inserted the name of James Bell for that of John Bell. That certificate was sent to the general land office, with the monthly returns of the register, and in July, 1844, a patent was issued in the name



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of James Bell, and sent to the register at Natchitoches, who retained it in his office till 1849. In 1849 John Bell sent to the office of the register his duplicate receipts, and the patent in the name of James Bell was delivered to him. Upon a representation of the facts to the commissioner of the general land office, this patent was canceled, and a new one issued to the plaintiff.

It appears, from the proof in the case, that the plaintiff had a brother, named James Bell, who was his agent for making the entry, and that the land was sold in March, 1844, as his property, by the sheriff of Caddo, as is stated in the answers of the defendants.

The act of congress of the 24th April, 1820, providing for the sales of the public lands of the United States, enacts, "That the purchaser at private sale shall produce to the register of the land office a receipt of the treasurer of the United States, or from the receiver of public moneys of the district, for the amount of the purchase money on any tract, before he shall enter the same at the land office." At various times, since the passage of the act, the *modes* of conducting sales at the different land offices of the United States have been prescribed by the commissioner, and the evidence to be afforded to the purchaser designated. The circular issued in 1831 contains the instructions under which the local officers were acting at the date of this entry. The instructions pertinent to this case are, that "when an individual applies to purchase a tract of land, he is required to file an application in writing therefor; on such application the register endorses his certificate, showing that the land is vacant and subject to entry, which certificate the applicant carries to the receiver, and is evidence on which the receiver permits payment to be made, and issues his receipt therefor; the duplicate of this is handed to the purchaser, as evidence of payment; and which should be surrendered when a patent, forwarded from the general land office, is delivered to him. The other receipt is handed to the register, who must immediately indicate the sale on his township plat, and enter the same on his tract book, [ \* 261 ] and is \*transmitted to the general land office with the monthly abstract of sales and certificates of purchase."

The certificates of purchase are made according to forms furnished by the general land office. One is issued to the purchaser, and another is retained, to be sent to the commissioner. They should be duplicates; and the instructions to the register in regard to them are, "that the designation of the tract, in the certificates of purchases, is always to be in writing, not in figures. The certificates are to be filled up in a plain, legible hand, and great care is to be taken in spelling the names of the purchasers. The monthly re-

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turn must always be accompanied by the receiver's receipts and register's certificates of purchase." From this statement of the act of congress and the regulations of the land office, it will be seen that the embarrassment in which this title is involved proceeds from an error committed by the register at Natchitoches in making up the duplicates of his certificate of purchase—the duplicate intended for the general land office—and from which the monthly abstract was prepared.

The plaintiff was nowise responsible for this. He had paid his money into the receiver's office, and obtained the receipt prescribed by the act of congress of 1820, before cited.

He had obtained his certificate of purchase, evincing his title to a patent certificate. At this stage of the proceeding, the register of the land office, in completing his office papers, and in making up his returns for Washington city, committed a mistake, which was not detected by the officers at Natchitoches in comparing their returns, (as they are ordered to do,) and eluded the vigilance of the officers at Washington. It was discovered at Natchitoches, when an agent of the plaintiff applied for the patent, and surrendered his duplicate receipt and certificate.

It was then discovered that the christian name of the plaintiff had been inaccurately set out in the returns at Washington and the patent. The supreme court of Louisiana say: "It appears from the evidence, that the plaintiff and his brother, James Bell, purchased the land in dispute from the United States on the same day—3d July, 1839—and that the patent certificates were issued in their respective names by the register of the land office at Natchitoches, Louisiana, bearing the same number."

We interpret the papers from the land office differently from the supreme court. There is no evidence, in our opinion, of more than one sale—that evinced by the receiver's receipt—and, in that receipt, John Bell, the plaintiff, is named as the purchaser.

We think there was but one certificate of \* purchase issued [ \* 262 ] to a purchaser—that in favor of John Bell. The certificate of purchase which contains the name of James Bell is found in the general land office. If that was intended for a James Bell, there should have been another for John Bell. But there is only a single certificate there, and the conclusion is irresistible, that the name *James* was entered by mistake for *John*. We find no evidence in the record to show that James Bell held any evidence of a purchase.

Whatever appearance of a title he had, is owing to the mistake in the duplicate certificate returned to the general land office, and

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the patent issued in his name. But this patent was never delivered to him. The question then arises, had the commissioner of the general land office authority to receive from John Bell the patent erroneously issued in the name of James Bell, and to issue one in the proper name of the purchaser? And the question, in our opinion, is exceedingly clear. The commissioner of the general land office exercises a general superintendence over the subordinate officers of his department, and is clothed with liberal powers of control, to be exercised for the purposes of justice, and to prevent the consequences of inadvertence, irregularity, mistake, and fraud, in the important and extensive operations of that officer for the disposal of the public domain. The power exercised in this case is a power to correct a clerical mistake, the existence of which is shown plainly by the record, and is a necessary power in the administration of every department. Our conclusion is, that the supreme court of Louisiana erred in denying the validity of this title, and in conceding any effect or operation to the certificate of purchase or patent issued in the name of James Bell, as vesting a title in a person bearing that name.

It is objected that this court has no jurisdiction over this judgment of the supreme court of Louisiana.

The plaintiff claimed the land described in his petition, under a purchase made from the United States, and produced muniments of title issued by their authority, and this title is pronounced to be inoperative by the district and supreme courts of Louisiana.

Does this appear by the record before us? The record in the supreme court of Louisiana purports to be a true and faithful transcript of the documents filed, orders made, proceedings had, and evidence adduced, on the trial in the district court. The supreme court possesses the right, and is under the obligation of examining questions of fact as well as of law, and to state the reasons of their judgment. The statement of the evidence adduced is [ \* 263 ] taken as an equivalent for a \* statement of the facts by the district judge in the practice of that court. It clearly appears that the ground upon which the judgment in the supreme court was given was the invalidity of the title of the plaintiff, because an older patent had been issued in favor of James Bell. We think this court has jurisdiction. (*Armstrong v. Treasurer, &c.*, 16 Pet. 261; *Grand Gulf R. R. and B. Co. v. Marshall*, 12 How. 165; *Almonester v. Kenton*, 9 H. 1.)

Judgment reversed. Cause remanded.

## THOMAS RICHARDSON, Plaintiff in Error, v. THE CITY OF BOSTON.

19 H. 263.

## RIPARIAN RIGHTS—FORMER JUDGMENT—RELATIVE FUNCTIONS OF COURT AND JURY.

1. The plea of the general issue in trespass does not put in issue the title, and therefore is not conclusive on that point in another suit. But in Massachusetts it is received as *prima facie* evidence.
2. The court may instruct a jury that there is not sufficient evidence to authorize them to find for plaintiff; but this can only be done when in fact there is no evidence to sustain plaintiff's claim.
3. It should be left to the jury to determine the locality, lines, corners, low-water mark, &c., referred to in a written document at the time it was made; also whether the effect of certain drains is to injure the property of plaintiff.

THIS was a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Rhode Island.

The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Bartlett*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Chandler* and *Mr. Loring*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [\* 266]

This is an action of trespass on the case brought by the plaintiff in error against the city of Boston, for the erection and maintenance of a drain at the foot of Summer street, which, it is alleged, is a nuisance, and injurious to the property of plaintiff. He is owner of two wharves, called the Price and the Bull wharf, which are extended from high to low-water mark, from the lots which adjoin Summer street on each side. \* The [\* 267] nuisance, which is the subject of complaint in this case, is the same as that in the case of *Boston v. Lecraw*, decided in this court, and reported in 17 Howard, 426.

The declaration contains seven counts, in four of which the plaintiff, as owner of the several wharves, and having the seizin and possession, claims a right of way, as appurtenant to the same, over the "dock," or "way and dock," which constitutes the interval between the wharves; also, that his wharves are bounded on the "town dock," "town way or dock," which he alleges to have been long used as a "public dock, slip, or way."

The fifth and sixth counts are for injuries to the reversion, with like averments. A seventh count avers the wharves to be bounded, respectively, "by a highway, town way, or public way, to the sea, extending from the corner of Summer and Sea streets to the channel, or low-water mark, which was duly laid out and established pursuant to law."

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The defendant pleaded the general issue, and on the trial the plaintiff offered in evidence the record of a former verdict and judgment rendered in his favor in an action against defendant for the erection of the same nuisance, the continuance of which is the subject of the present suit. The rejection of this evidence by the court is the subject of the first bill of exceptions.

It is contended that this record was not only evidence, but conclusive of the right of the plaintiff, and *prima facie* evidence of the continuance of such right; and that plaintiff, having no opportunity to plead it as an estoppel, may exhibit it as matter of evidence.

It may be admitted that numerous decisions may be found in many of the State courts affirming this proposition; nevertheless, it has not been universally adopted. The leading case of *Outram v. Morewood* (2 East. 174) establishes the following proposition, in which all concur: "That if a verdict be found on any fact or title distinctly put in issue in any action of trespass, such verdict may be pleaded, by way of estoppel, in another action between the same parties or their privies, in respect to the same fact or title." But estoppels, which preclude the party from showing the truth, are not favored. To give the verdict the effect of an estoppel, the facts must be distinctly put in issue.

The plea of the general issue, in actions of trespass, or case, does not necessarily put the title in issue; and, although the judgment is conclusive as a bar to future litigation for the thing thereby decided, it is not necessarily an estoppel in another action for [ \* 268 ] a different trespass. The judgment can \* only give the plaintiff an ascertained right to his damages, and the means of obtaining them. These principles seem to have been adopted by the courts of Massachusetts, and applied to cases like the present. In the decision of this point, we must be guided by the decisions of the courts of that State.

In the case of *Standish v. Parker*, (2 Pick. 20,) which was an action for a nuisance, the court say: "We think it very clearly settled that nothing is conclusively determined by the verdict but the damages for the interruption covered by the declaration. In actions for torts, nothing is conclusively settled but the point or points put directly in issue. By the plea of the general issue, the title is not concluded, because it cannot be made to appear upon the general issue that the title ever came in question." (See also 15 Pick. 564.)

Nevertheless, though a verdict in such case is not conclusive, it is permitted to go to the jury as *prima facie*, or persuasive, evidence. (3 Pick. 288.) If the evidence of the facts involved in the

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first trial are still doubtful, if witnesses were then examined whose testimony cannot now be obtained, for these and many other reasons the former verdict may have the effect of highly-persuasive evidence on another trial of the same question. But if on the last trial new evidence has been discovered, or if the question of title submitted on the first trial was connected with instructions in law which have since been found to be erroneous; or if a different verdict on the same evidence would have resulted from the different instructions given on the last, it is plain that the first verdict could have but little or no persuasive effect. Title is often a question of mixed law and fact—and a party is not concluded by an erroneous opinion of the court, pronounced in a former case.

We are of opinion, therefore, that the court erred in not permitting the record of the former suit to be given in evidence to the jury.

2. At the conclusion of the trial, the court, at the request of defendant's counsel, instructed the jury "that there was not sufficient evidence in the cause to authorize the jury to find the rights claimed by the plaintiff."

As it is the duty of the jury to decide the facts, the sufficiency of evidence to prove those facts must necessarily be within their province. The jury cannot assume the truth of any material averment without some evidence; and it is error in the court to instruct the jury that they may find a material fact of which there is no evidence. An instruction like this is imperative on a jury; it has taken the place, in practice, of a demurrer to evidence, and must be governed by the same rules. If there be "*no evidence whatever*," as in the case of *\* Parks v. Ross*, (11 How. 393,) [ \* 269 ] to prove the averments of the declaration, it is the duty of the court to give such peremptory instruction. But if there be *some* evidence tending to support the averment, its value must be submitted to the jury with proper instructions from the court. If this were not so, the court might usurp the decision of facts altogether, and make the verdict but an echo of their opinions.

The court below seem to have considered the decision of this court, in the case of *Boston v. Lecraw*, as requiring them to give the instruction demanded by the defendant. The action in that case was for the same alleged nuisance by a tenant of the present plaintiff. But the plaintiff in that case claimed no other right of way over the lands of defendant, save the public right of navigation; and this court decided that the public right of navigation, between high and low-water mark, was defeasible at any time by the owner of the subjacent land. That, as the space between the



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plaintiff's wharves had been converted into a dock by the accident of its position, so long as it remained unreclaimed, every person had a right to pass and repass over it. The exercise of this public right, for any length of time whatever, would therefore form no grounds of presumption either of a public dedication or a private grant to the owners of the adjoining wharves. While it remains unreclaimed, it is a public highway or dock, by a paramount but defeasible title. The adjoining wharves may receive much more advantage than others from the use of it, but they cannot convert it to a private use, under color of a public right.

The public officers of a town have no right to lay out a town way between high water and the channel of a navigable river, or appropriate the shore or flats to the use of the inhabitants of a town in the form of a way or road. (1 Pick. 179; 5 Pick. 494.) But in the present case the city of Boston is owner of the land, and has the same right to reclaim their flats which other owners have. Before they are so reclaimed, the public and the adjoiners may exercise their paramount right of navigation. But if the city elects to reclaim its portion of the shore, and extend Summer street to low water, it has a right so to do. And if the street should be less beneficial to the adjoiners in this form, than when they could use it as a dock under the public right of navigation, they cannot complain. The absence of these advantages may be a loss to them, but if incurred by the defendants' exercise of their own rights, it is no wrong to them.

But if the city has determined to reclaim this land, and has laid out a street thereon, or continued Summer street to low-water mark, the right to use it as a street or highway on land [ \* 270 ] \* becomes appurtenant to the property of the adjoiners. It may be the duty of the city to make drains along or under the streets, but they cannot construct them so as to hinder the public use of them as streets, or erect thereon a nuisance to the adjoiners. If Summer street be extended to low water, the plaintiff has a right to pass along and across the same, and anything which obstructs such passage is a nuisance, and injurious to his rights.

The seventh count of plaintiff's declaration claims a right of way as appurtenant to his land or wharves, on the ground that Summer street extends to low water. In support of this allegation, the following entry in the town records was given in evidence: "October 31, 1683. The selectmen all met this day, staked out a highway for the town's use, on the southerly side of the land belonging to the late John Gill, deceased, being thirty foot in breadth from the lower corner of said Gill's wharf next the sea."

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It is the duty of the court to construe written instruments ; but the application of their provisions to external objects described therein is the peculiar province of the jury. Whether this document describes Summer street as it was afterwards laid out from high-water mark ; whether “the lower corner of Gill’s wharf next the sea” was at *that time* (in 1683) at low-water mark ; whether this street was staked out to low water, were questions which should have been submitted to the jury. The fact that the learned counsel differ so widely as to the situation of the points called for as the boundary of the street next the sea, shows conclusively that it is a question for the jury, and not for the court.

Moreover, the court were requested by plaintiff’s counsel to instruct the jury, “that if the jury shall find that, by reason of the acts of defendants complained of in the declaration, that part of plaintiff’s wharf below low-water mark, held by him under a grant of the legislature, has been injured in the manner set forth in the declaration, then the plaintiff is entitled to recover.”

There was some evidence that the drain constructed by defendant was not carried out sufficiently to discharge its contents so as to be swept off by the tides ; but that it caused an accumulation of matter at the outer end of the plaintiff’s wharves, insomuch that vessels could not approach them with the same depth of water as formerly. If this be so, it was an injury to the plaintiff, for which he was entitled to recover damages.

This question should have been submitted to the jury, and this instruction given, as requested by plaintiff’s counsel. The \* others are disposed of by the opinion of this court in Bos- [ \* 271 ] ton v. Lecraw.

For these reasons, the judgment is reversed, and *venire de novo* awarded.

Mr. Justice CURTIS, having been of counsel, did not sit in this case.

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FELICITÉ FLETCHER HIPPIE and others, Appellants, v. CELINE BABIN and others.

19 H. 271.

JURISDICTION IN EQUITY.

1. Where a bill in equity is brought to recover real estate which is founded on a purely legal title, the court has not jurisdiction.
2. Nor is this rule varied by the fact that an account for rents and profits is asked, or

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that defendants may have an undivided interest in the title, so that a partition might become necessary.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana, and the case, as applicable to the points decided, is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Smiley and Mr. Perin*, for appellants.

*Mr. Taylor*, for appellees.

[ \* 276 ] \* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

The appellants filed their bill to recover land within the district, in the possession of the defendants, and for an account of the rents, profits, and receipts, during the period of their occupancy. They allege that James Fletcher, their ancestor, died in 1804, leaving a valid will, by which he devised to his widow and three children the principal portion of his succession, and appointed the former the executrix. The property described in the bill had been sold in 1801, but the purchaser had not paid the price stipulated at this time. The testator directed, that if the purchaser should complete the purchase, the sum received should be put to interest, on good security, for the mother and children, until the children should attain the age of sixteen years, when the succession should be divided. In May, 1806, the executrix agreed with the purchaser to rescind the contract of sale, received a conveyance of his title to the heirs of Fletcher, and refunded to him the money he had paid, being near \$4,000.

In June, 1806, the executrix filed her petition in the superior court of the Orleans Territory, being the court of general law, equity, and probate jurisdiction, for the Territory, in which she declares the cancellation of the contract of sale aforesaid; and to enable her to refund the money, she had borrowed that sum from Daniel Clark; that the land was unproductive, and that she was unable to pay her debt. She prayed an order for the sale of the property, to provide for the education and maintenance of her minor children, and the discharge of her debt, and to carry the will of her husband into effect respecting the disposition

[ \* 277 ] of the remainder of the purchase money. The \* court made the necessary order, to empower the executrix to sell and convey the lands for such price as she could obtain, and to receive the money therefor; also, to appropriate the sum necessary for the payment of her debt, and to put out the remainder at interest, as required by the will.

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Daniel Clark became the purchaser at private sale from the executrix, for the sum of \$9,000, and received her conveyance.

The appellants impeach this sale as unauthorized and illegal, and insist upon their title under the conveyance to them.

The defendants claim by their answers as *bona fide* purchasers from persons deriving their title by valid conveyances in good faith from Daniel Clark, and affirm that the family of Fletcher left the United States in 1807, and enjoyed the benefit of the money paid to the executrix; that the lands have become valuable by their improvements, and that they, and the persons under whom they claim, have held the possession since 1806. The bill was dismissed by the circuit court, on the ground that the remedy at law is plain, adequate, and complete, and from this decree this appeal is prosecuted.

The supreme court of Louisiana, in a contest between the appellants and other parties, for other lands, have decided that the executrix was not authorized to convey the shares of her minor children by private act. (*Fletcher v. Cavelier*, 4 La. R. 268; 10 La. R. 116, S. C.)

But we are relieved from the duty of applying these decisions, or inquiring into the validity of the pleas of the appellees, by the opinion we have formed concerning the jurisdiction of the court of chancery over the cause. The sixteenth section of the judiciary act of 1789 declares, "that suits in equity shall not be sustained in either of the courts of the United States, in any case where plain, adequate, and complete remedy may be had at law."

The bill in this cause is, in substance and legal effect, an ejectment bill. The title appears by the bill to be merely legal; the evidence to support it appears from documents accessible to either party; and no particular circumstances are stated, showing the necessity of the courts interfering, either for preventing suits or other vexation, or for preventing an injustice, irremediable at law. In *Welby v. Duke of Rutland*, (6 Bro. P. C. cas. 575,) it is stated, that the general practice of courts of equity, in not entertaining suits for establishing legal titles, is founded upon clear reasons; and the departing from that practice, where there is no necessity for so doing, would be subversive of the legal and constitutional distinctions between the different jurisdictions of law and equity; and though \*the admission of a party in a suit is [ \* 278 ] conclusive as to matters of fact, or may deprive him of the benefit of a privilege which, if insisted on, would exempt him from the jurisdiction of the court, yet no admission of parties can change the law, or give jurisdiction to a court in a cause of which it hath no jurisdiction.

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Agreeably hereto, the established and universal practice of courts of equity is to dismiss the plaintiff's bill, if it appears to be grounded on a title merely legal, and not cognizable by them, notwithstanding the defendant has answered the bill, and insisted on matter of title. In *Foley v. Hill*, (1 Phil. 399,) Lyndhurst, lord chancellor, dismissed a bill upon an appeal from the vice chancellor upon the same grounds. He said, "it was a point of great importance to the practice of the court." The objection was not made in the pleadings nor presented in the decree of the vice chancellor.

This decree was affirmed by the house of lords. (2 H. L. cas. 28.) The practice of the courts of the United States corresponds with that of the chancery of Great Britain, except where it has been changed by rule, or is modified by local circumstances or local convenience. This court has denied relief in cases in equity where the remedy at law has been plain, adequate, and complete, though the question was not raised by the defendants in their pleadings, nor suggested by the counsel in their arguments. (2 Cr. 419; 7 Cr. 70, 89; 5 Pet. 496; 2 How. 383.) In *Parsons v. Bedford*, (3 Pet. 433,) the court insists on the necessity imposed on the circuit court in Louisiana, to maintain the distinction between the jurisdiction in which legal rights are to be ascertained, and that where equitable rights alone are recognized and equitable remedies administered.

And the result of the argument is, that whenever a court of law is competent to take cognizance of a right, and has power to proceed to a judgment which affords a plain, adequate, and complete remedy, without the aid of a court of equity, the plaintiff must proceed at law, because the defendant has a constitutional right to a trial by jury.

The appellants contend, that upon the pleadings and evidence a proper case for the jurisdiction of chancery appears, and that the circuit court *mero motu* was not warranted in dismissing the bill: 1st. Because it is shown that in 1806 the children of Fletcher were minors, and they are authorized to call upon the defendants for an account as guardians. 2d. That the defendants being entitled to the estate of the executrix and widow, under her conveyance, the plaintiffs can maintain the bill for a partition. 3d. That [ \* 279 ] the court of chancery is \* better fitted to take an account for rents, profits, and improvements, and may decide the question of title as incident to the account. 4th. That a multiplicity of suits will be avoided.

There are precedents in which the right of an infant to treat a person who enters upon his estate with notice of his title, as a guardian or bailiff, and to exact an account in equity for the profits,

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for the whole period of his occupancy, is recognized. (*Bloomfield v. Eyre*, 8 Beav. 250; *Van Epps v. Van Deusen*, 4 Paige, 64.) But in those cases the title must, if disputed, be established at law, or other grounds of jurisdiction must be shown. In the present case, the defendants have all entered upon the lands since the plaintiffs arrived at their majority. They are purchasers of adverse titles under which possession has been maintained for a long period. The bill does not recognize their title to any part of the land, and there has been no unity of possession; so that the bill cannot be maintained, either as a bill for an account on behalf of minors or for a partition. (*Adams's Eq. sec. 229*; 4 Rand. Va. R. 74, 493.)

Nor can the court retain the bill, under an impression that a court of chancery is better adapted for the adjustment of the account for rents, profits, and improvements. The rule of the court is, that when a suit for the recovery of the possession can be properly brought in a court of equity, and a decree is given, that court will direct an account as an incident in the cause.

But when a party has a right to a possession, which he can enforce at law, his right to the rents and profits is also a legal right, and must be enforced in the same jurisdiction. The instances where bills for an account of rents and profits have been maintained are those in which special grounds have been stated, to show that courts of law could not give a plain, adequate, and complete remedy. No instances exist where a person who had been successful at law has been allowed to file a bill for an account of rents and profits during the tortious possession held against him, or in which the complexity of the account has afforded a motive for the interposition of a court of chancery to decide the title and to adjust the account. (*Dormer v. Fortescue*, 3 Atk. 124; *Barnewell v. Barnewell*, 3 Rid. P. C. 24.) Nor does the case show that a multiplicity of suits would be avoided, or that justice could be administered with less expense and vexation in this court than a court of law.

Decree affirmed.

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JOHN D. WOLFE and another, Appellants, v. JOHN H. LEWIS.

19 H. 280.

ATTORNEY AND CLIENT—LIEN OF THE LATTER.

1. Where plaintiffs residing in New York recovered a decree in Alabama, in which the money was paid into court, their counsel, in procuring the decree, cannot, by a mere *ex parte* order of the court, have a long account for legal services in other cases, settled before a master, and a decree for its payment out of the fund in court.



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2. Such a proceeding is void for want of parties or of process, and is altogether irregular and indefensible, and the order is reversed by this court.

THIS is an appeal from the district court for the northern district of Alabama, and the case is well stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Thomas*, for appellants.

*Mr. Johnson*, for appellee.

[ \* 281 ]     \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from the district court for the northern district of Alabama.

The bill was filed to foreclose a mortgage given to secure the payment of \$12,000. Payments on this debt were made, amounting to the sum of \$8,527, the last payment being made the 9th of October, 1839. An account was prayed, and that the mortgaged premises might be sold.

A supplemental bill was filed the 30th of November, 1843, stating that the last installment of the mortgage debt had become due, and praying that the premises might be sold to satisfy that payment also.

The answer admitted the allegations of the bill, but claimed an additional credit of \$600 on the mortgage. On the 23d of May, 1844, a final decree was entered, directing a sale of the mortgaged premises to pay the amount due, stated to be \$10,077.68, with interest to the time of sale. Afterwards, at November term, 1848, the commissioner, who had been appointed to make the sale, returned that Cox, the defendant, had, without sale of the property, paid him the balance due under the decree, after deducting certain payments, made before his appointment, which amounted to the sum of \$8,318.47, which was brought into court.

At that term an entry in the cause was made, by consent of the solicitors of the parties, that all matters of account between John H. Lewis and his late client, Thomas A. Ronalds, deceased, and between the said Lewis and John D. Wolfe, executor, and Maria D. L. Ronalds, executrix, of the last will and testament of Thomas A. Ronalds, be referred to the standing master in chancery, "who was directed to report a statement thereof, and of all his proceedings relative thereto, to the next term of the court."

At November term, 1850, the master filed his report, which was exceedingly voluminous—covering more than two hundred and sixty pages of the record.

[ \* 282 ]     \* The master states an account, in which he charges Lewis with all sums, and interest, from the time he be-

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came chargeable up to the date of the report, 25th of November, 1850, amounting to the sum of \$63,461.71. He shows the amount of credits claimed by Lewis, to same date, amounting to the sum of \$55,966.82. Exceptions were filed to this report by both parties; and at May term, 1854, the court made a final decree on the master's report; in which is set out the manner in which the controversy arose, and referring to the order of November term, 1848, founded upon the motion in the Cox case, to remove Lewis from his capacity as attorney, so as to procure the payment to the complainants directly of the proceeds under the decree brought into court. And the court states that it considers the proceedings, as presented, not within its cognizance, inasmuch as no writ had been issued as between these parties, no bill filed, and no suit in any form commenced; there was no allegation or charge on the one side, or response or denial on the other; nor was the matter collateral to, or growing out of, any case pending.

On consideration, the court, though disposed to strike the matter from the docket, yet decreed that, as a large sum of money had been paid in under its order, it must be, in the language of the court, in some way paid out; and the exceptions to the master's reports were overruled, and the same was confirmed; and the marshal, as receiver, was ordered to pay over to Lewis the sum of \$4,336.42 of the proceeds in his hands, and the residue, \$3,982.05, he was directed to pay to the complainants. From this decree the complainants appealed.

This was an irregular proceeding, and without the authority of law. The bill was filed originally against Bartley Cox, the defendant, against whom the decree for the sum of \$10,077.68 was entered. This being done, Lewis procured an order for his dismissal from the case, that he might bring up an account against Thomas A. Ronalds in his lifetime, and his executors since his decease, for professional services. And this was done without the form of suit, or the matter having any relation to the case before the court. And when it is considered that Ronalds was a citizen of New York, and that his representatives are citizens of New York, and do not seem to have had any notice of this illegal procedure, it can receive no sanction from this court.

It is contended that Lewis, as counsel, had a right to receive and receipt for moneys in the case; and whether he was entitled to reserve any portion thereof or not, can be properly tested only by a bill filed by the appellants against him to account.

\* But the whole proceeding in behalf of Lewis, as against [ \* 283 ] the complainants, was irregular and void, the court having

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no jurisdiction of the matter. The order was of no importance that the decree should be without prejudice to either party, and not pleadable in bar to any subsequent litigation between them upon the same subject-matter, as the proceedings were invalid. But, as regards the complainants, it was error in the court to order any part of its original decree in their favor to be paid to one who was not properly before it as a party. For this purpose, neither complainants, nor the defendant, Lewis, were before the court, or amenable to its jurisdiction. The decree is therefore reversed, with costs. And the court direct that an order be transmitted to the circuit court, to require the defendant, Lewis, to pay over any money received by him under the decree to the proper officer of the court, that it may be paid to the complainants.

ROSWELL BEEBE and others, Appellants, v. WILLIAM RUSSELL.

19 H. 283.

WHAT IS A FINAL DECREE?

1. The cases as to what constitutes a final decree from which an appeal will lie considered.
2. It will not lie when there is a reference to a master to ascertain and state an account on which a decree of the court must afterwards be had.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the district of Arkansas; and the state of the record on which the court dismissed the appeal is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Lawrence*, for appellants.

*Mr. Pike*, for appellees.

[ \* 284 ] \* Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from the circuit court of the United States for the district of Arkansas.

We find, from our examination of the record, that the decree from which this appeal has been taken is not final, within the meaning of the acts of congress of 1789 and 1803. It will therefore be dismissed for a want of jurisdiction. The right of appeal is conferred, defined, and regulated, by the second section of the act of March 2d, 1803, which, however, adopts and applies the regulations prescribed by the 22d, 23d, and 24th sections of the judiciary act of the 24th September, 1789, ch. 20, respecting writs of error. The language of both is, that final judgments and decrees, rendered in

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any circuit, &c., &c., may be reviewed in the supreme court, where the matter in dispute, exclusive of costs, shall exceed the sum or value of two thousand dollars. It has been the object of this court at all times, though an accidental deviation may be found to restrict the cases which have been brought to this court, either by appeal or by writ of error, to those in which the rights of the parties have been fully and finally determined by judgments or decrees in the court below, whether they were cases in admiralty, in equity, or common law. In the case of the *Palmyra*, (10 Wheat. 502,) where, in a libel for a tortious seizure, restitution with costs and damages had been decreed, but the damages had not been assessed, this court held that the decree was not final, and dismissed the appeal. It said, “the decree of the circuit court was not final in the sense of the act of congress. *The damages remain undisposed of, and an appeal may still lie upon that part of the decree awarding damages.* The whole cause is not, therefore, finally determined in the circuit court, and we are of the opinion that the cause cannot be divided so as to bring up distinct parts of it.” This court also ruled, in *Brown v. Swann*, (9 Peters, 1,) that a decree enjoining a judgment at law taxing a sum which remained to be ascertained with precision was not final, to permit an appeal from it. We might multiply citations from the reports of this court, to show its caution upon this subject. We feel very confident no case has been decided by it, when the question of the finality of a decree or judgment has been brought to its notice, in which the distinction between final and interlocutory decrees has not been regarded as it was meant to be by the legislation of congress, and as it was understood by the courts in England and in this country, before congress acted upon the \*subject. A decree is understood to be [\* 285] interlocutory whenever an inquiry as to matter of law or fact is directed, preparatory to a final decision. (1 New. 322.) And we find it stated in the second volume of Perkins’s *Daniel’s Chancery Practice*, 1193, “that the most usual ground for not making a perfect decree in the first instance, is the necessity which frequently exists for a reference to a master of the court, to make inquiries, or take accounts, or sell estates, and adjust other matters which are necessary to be disposed of, before a complete decision can be come to upon the subject-matter of the suit.” When a decree finally decides and disposes of the whole merits of the cause, and reserves no further questions or directions for the future judgment of the court, so that it will not be necessary to bring the cause again before the court for its final decision, it is a final decree. It is true, a decree may be final, although it directs a reference to a

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master, if all the consequential directions depending upon the result of the master's report are contained in the decree, so that no further decree of the court will be necessary, upon the confirmation of the report *to give the parties the entire and full benefit of the previous decision of the court.* (Mills v. Hoag, 7 Paige, 18.)

Testing, then, this decree by the citations just given from Daniel's Chancery Practice, from the case of Mills v. Hoag, our inquiry is, whether further action of the court in the nature of a decree would not be necessary to give to the defendant in error the benefit of the "rents and profits received by the defendants in the court below, or which could or ought to have been received by them, or any of them, for any part of the premises," which it had directed the defendants to surrender to the complainant; and whether the court's direction to the master, how he should take the accounts of rents and profits, and that no allowances were to be made by the master for improvements which the defendants had made, and that no account of rent was to be taken upon permanent and valuable improvements erected by them, do not involve rights in the respective parties, and a pecuniary uncertainty in respect to the sum to be paid by the defendant, which are only made certain and operative by a decree of the court upon the master's report. The court's direction was, "that it be referred to the master, to take an account of the rents and profits received, or which could and ought to have been received, by the defendants, or any of them, for any part of the said premises; that he take such an account distributively as to the said Ashley and Beebe, in the lifetime of Ashley, and as to his heirs since his death, and as to said G. C. Walker since his purchases; that he make no allowances for improvements [ \* 286 ] made \* by them, or either of them, and take no account of rent upon permanent and valuable improvements erected by them; and that he report to the court here, at the next term thereof. And it is further ordered, &c., that the defendants do pay the costs of this suit." Thus leaving a sum to be ascertained with precision by the master from different elements, from which he is directed to make up the account, and those not merely consequential from the previous directions of the decree. Further, a decree from which an appeal may be taken must not only be final, but it must be one in which the matter in dispute, exclusive of costs, shall exceed the sum or value of two thousand dollars. The value of the subject-matter in controversy may be shown from the record, or by evidence *aliunde*, when it is disputed; and in this case the record discloses that to be such as would give the court jurisdiction; but the decree also shows that a sum is still unascertained between the

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parties, which may or may not exceed two thousand dollars, and, if it does, which may be the subject of another appeal. The object of the law, and the interpretation of it by this court, is to prevent a case from coming to it from the courts below, in which the whole controversy has not been determined finally, and that the same may be done in this court. We say, "in which the whole controversy has not been determined." Wherever it has been, and ministerial duties are only to be performed, though that be to ascertain an amount due, the decree is final.

But the reference of a case to a master, to take an account upon evidence, and from the examination of the parties, and to make or not to make allowances affecting the rights of the parties, and to report his results to the court, is not a final decree; because his report is subject to exceptions from either side, which must be brought to the notice of the court before it can be available. It can only be made so by the courts overruling the exceptions, or by an order confirming the report, with a final decree for its appropriation and payment. We have just said the decree is final when ministerial duties are only to be done to ascertain a sum due. The case of *Ray v. Law*, in 3 Cranch, 179, is an instance. It was then ruled by this court, that a decree for a sale under a mortgage is such a final decree as may be appealed from. Afterwards, when that case was cited in the case of the *Palmyra*, (10 Wheat. 502,) Marshall, chief justice, said for the court: "In that case, which was an appeal in an equity cause, there was a decree of foreclosure and sale of the mortgaged property. The sale could only be ordered after an account taken, or the sum due on the mortgage ascertained in some other way. And the usual decree is, that unless the defendant shall pay that sum in \* a given time, the [ \* 287 ] estate shall be sold. The decree of sale, therefore, is in such a case final upon the rights of parties in controversy, and leaves ministerial duties only to be performed." In such a case, the direction is but a consequence of the decree, and no further decree is necessary. So a decree upon the coming in of the master's report on a bill for specific performance, ascertaining the quantity of land to be conveyed, and the balance of money to be paid, and that the conveyance should be executed on such balance being tendered, is a final decree. (*Navis v. Waters*, 1 John. Ch. 85.) But in the last case cited, it would not have been final if the decree had not directed the conveyance of the land upon the sum found by the master being tendered.

It has been supposed that this court did not apply its present interpretation of the laws regulating appeal in the cases of *Whiting*



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*v. Bank of the United States*, (13 Pet. 6,) of *Michaud v. Girod*, (4 How. 503,) and in *Forgay et al. v. Conrad*, (6 How. 201.) It is, however, not so. Whiting's case, in that part of it relating to appeals, was only what this court had said in *Ray v. Law*, in the case of the *Palmyra*, before cited, that a decree of foreclosure and sale is final upon the merits of the controversy, and an appeal lies therefrom. In *Michaud v. Girod*, no such point was made in the argument of it, nor touched upon in the opinion of the court. In *Forgay's* case, it was made upon the decree given by the court below, and it was adjudged by this court to be final to give this court jurisdiction of it. But it was so, upon the ground that the whole merits of the controversy between the parties had been determined, *that execution had been awarded*, and that the case had been referred to the master merely for the purpose of adjusting the accounts. The fact is, the *order of the court in that case for referring it to a master was peculiar*, making it doubtful, if it could in any way control or qualify the antecedent decree of the court upon the whole merits of the controversy, or modify it in any way, *except upon a petition for a rehearing*. We refer to the case, however, with confidence, to show that the reasoning of the opinion is cautionary upon the subject of bringing appeals, and confirmatory of what we have said in this case. We dismiss the case, the court not having jurisdiction of the appeal.

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TERENCE FARRELLY and others, Appellants, *v.* WILLIAM W. WOODFOLK.

19 H. 288.

FINAL DECREE.

No appeal lies from an interlocutory decree referring a case to the clerk or master to state an account between the parties. Previous case referred to.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the district of Arkansas, and the matter is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Pike*, for appellants.

*Mr. Meigs*, for appellee.

Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court.

This case having been submitted to the court upon printed arguments, we find from an examination of the record that the appeal

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has been prematurely taken from an interlocutory and not a final decree.

After reciting such facts in the case as the court deemed to be necessary for understanding the subject-matter of controversy, and the court's directions in respect to the rights of the complainant, the court then orders that the cause shall be referred to the clerk of the court as a special master in chancery, to take and state an account of the sum for which the lands are bound under the mortgage exhibited in the pleadings in the cause; and also to take and state an account, showing what money and property Morton and his wife, and Mary T. Notribe, widow of Frederic Notribe, have severally received, and are entitled to receive, which were of the estate of Frederic Notribe at the time of his death; and a further account, showing what portion of said estate, if any, remains to be administered, setting forth all particulars thereof as far as practicable, and if necessary to the due execution of this order. And the master is directed to call for and examine on oath any of the parties to this suit, and also to take testimony of witnesses touching any of the matters aforesaid, and to make report to \*this court. This is so obviously an interlocutory de- [ \* 289 ] cree, that we do not think it necessary to examine it in detail, to show that a further and final decree is necessary, to give to the complainant any of the advantages to which the court in its previous directions has declared him to be entitled.

For the reasons given in the opinion in the case of Roswell Beebe *et al.*, appellants, v. William Russell, we therefore direct this cause to be dismissed for want of jurisdiction.

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ARCHIBALD BABCOCK, Appellant, v. EDWARD WYMAN.

19 H. 289.

## ABSOLUTE DEED TREATED AS A MORTGAGE.

1. It is the doctrine of this court that a deed for real estate, absolute on its face, may be shown by parol to have been executed as a security for payment of money.
2. A person in possession under such deed, holding as trustee, cannot avail himself of the statute of limitation.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the district of Massachusetts, and the facts are fully stated in the opinion.

Chief Justice TANEY and Mr. Justice DANIEL did not sit in this case.

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*Mr. Loring and Mr. Merwin*, for appellant.

*Mr. Bartlett*, for appellee.

[ \* 293 ]     \* Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from the decree of the circuit court for Massachusetts.

The bill states the following facts: Nehemiah Wyman was seized in fee of about eleven and a half acres of land in Charleston, purchased by him of Tuft's administrator, one acre of which he sold to Foster, who gave a mortgage to secure the payment of the consideration of \$600, which sum was not paid when due, and he entered to foreclose. The entire tract on the 1st of December, 1820, had been mortgaged by him to Francis Wyman, his brother, to secure three notes of that date, one for \$676, payable in one month; another for \$650, payable in six months; the third for \$704.39, payable in one year; interest to be paid on each note semi-annually.

Shortly after this, Francis Wyman, by his will, dated 14th June, 1822, devised to defendant, Babcock, all his estate, including said notes and mortgage, in trust for testator's wife and children, and made Babcock his executor. The testator died in August, 1822. On the first of December, 1824, Nehemiah paid Babcock, as trustee and executor, the note for \$704 and interest; and from time to time paid the interest on the other notes, up to December, 1826.

In 1825 or 1826, Nehemiah became embarrassed, and having entire confidence in his brother-in-law, Babcock, he, by deed, 26th April, 1826, mortgaged the eleven acres of land as security of a note to Babcock of that date, for \$1,200, payable in one year, with interest. At this time, little, if anything, was due to Babcock, but it was understood, between them, that Babcock would become security for him, or advance money to him, the mortgage to stand as a security. Before the 20th of November, 1828, Babcock

[ \* 294 ] did become bound for and advanced \* to him upwards of \$400. In addition to this, there was due to Babcock as executor, for rent, \$136.71. On a settlement, Nehemiah executed to Babcock three notes, one dated 7th November, 1828, for \$486.79, of which \$400.08 were due Babcock individually, and \$86.71 to the heirs of Nehemiah Wyman, sen.; another note for \$8.10, and third for \$50, due to the heirs of the same, were given.

Nehemiah being thus indebted to Babcock, as trustee and executor, and not being able to pay the interest, Babcock and William Wyman, brother of Nehemiah, urged him to make a clear deed in fee for the land aforesaid, to Babcock, that he might manage and

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improve the same, and apply the rents and profits to pay interest on the encumbrances, and to the gradual liquidation of the principal. And finding that this conveyance to Babcock was made a condition of further advances, he eventually conveyed the estate to Babcock, it being expressly agreed by Babcock, that, notwithstanding the form of the conveyance, it should stand as security only for the sums due to him.

That on the 20th of November, 1828, a memorandum was made out of the sums thus due, and handed to Nehemiah, as evidence of the amount for which the land was held.

At the time this deed was executed, no one of the notes held by Babcock was surrendered, nor the mortgage to Francis Wyman, deceased. All the evidences of indebtedness remained in the hands of Babcock, Nehemiah holding only the memorandum of the sums. The total amount of the notes in said memorandum, with interest to the 20th November, 1828, amounted to the sum of \$2,033.87.

Upon receiving the above deed, Babcock took possession under it, not only of the eleven acres, but of the adjoining acre. Babcock, it is alleged, received annually, from sales of clay, grass, and ledge stone, from the land, more than enough to pay interest and taxes. Nehemiah having removed to the west, regardless of his trust, Babcock sold the land at private sale, without notice to the said Nehemiah, and in fraud of his rights, for eight thousand dollars.

In the sale, Babcock represented himself to be the sole owner of the premises. On the 4th of February, 1853, Nehemiah conveyed his right to redeem to Edward Wyman, the complainant, &c. Within two years, Babcock has promised William Wyman, acting for his brother, that he would come to an account with Nehemiah for the price of the land, and pay him the proceeds of the sales, deducting the debts aforesaid, if he would take his notes on time; and would refer the question of amount of rents and profits to the arbitrament of neighbors. \* Babcock has frequently, recently, admitted that it was originally intended that said deed should stand as security for the amount set forth in the memorandum; and that he always intended to do right in the matter, but that he had been advised by counsel, that the agreement, not being in writing, could not be enforced, and this was the reason he refused to perform it. [ \* 295 ]

The bill prays for an account, and the defendant in his answer admits the conveyance stated in the bill, and that the land was subject to the mortgages. He avers the consideration named in the deed was the amount then due defendant in his own right, and

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as executor and trustee; and the further sum of \$8.10 due the defendant, and \$50 due as agent. He admits no additional consideration was paid; but he states the land was not worth more than \$1,900; that he consented to receive the deed in payment of the sums due him personally, and upon an agreement that if he should be able to obtain therefrom, in addition, enough to pay the sums due to him as executor and trustee, he would pay these sums, and upon no other trust or confidence whatever.

That, upon the delivery of the deed, he canceled the notes of Nehemiah held in his own right, and either surrendered them to him or destroyed them. That he did not cancel the notes held by him as executor or trustee, because he was not satisfied that he should receive enough from the land to pay the same; and in order to prevent the presumption that he had so agreed absolutely, he made a minute thereon to the effect that he did not guarantee the payment thereof, it being the understanding between him and Nehemiah, that Nehemiah should be personally liable therefor.

That he made no other agreement, and he denies that it was understood or agreed, that the land was conveyed to him on the trust set forth in the bill; but insists that the conveyance was absolute, in payment of the sums due him, and liabilities incurred; and the only understanding was, that if the defendant should realize therefrom more than enough to pay his own claims, he would pay the debts due him as executor and trustee.

Defendant took possession of the land, and for eight years occupied it, Nehemiah never claiming any interest in it. He denies the allegations of the bill, as to the trust; sets up the defense that the agreement, not being in writing, cannot be enforced. He denies that he proposed a compromise, if his notes would be taken on time, as alleged, and he pleads the statute of twenty years' limitation, &c., and avers the profits of the land did not exceed the taxes, &c.

Three points may be considered as embracing the merits of this case:

[ \* 296 ] \* 1. Was the deed executed by Nehemiah Wyman to Babcock, for the eleven and one-half acres of ground, given in trust?

2. Can this trust be established by parol evidence?

3. Does the statute of limitation or lapse of time affect the complainant's rights?

No one can read the history of this case, as stated in the bill, without being impressed with the confidential relations of the parties. The grantor and the grantee were brothers-in-law, and

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the advisers bore the same relation to the grantee. It was a family concern, designed, as it would seem from the bill, to aid an embarrassed member of it, without a probability of loss by the other members.

The bill charges, when the deed in question was executed, the sums which it was intended to secure were stated, and handed to Nehemiah. This is not denied in the answer, and William Wyman, the brother, being present, swears, as a witness, to the sums so stated, amounting in the whole to the sum of \$2,033.87, the consideration named in the deed. This list was in the handwriting of the son of Babcock, and the paper was delivered to Nehemiah in the presence of the witness. The deed was drawn by the witness, and he knows that the sums named included all the debts which Nehemiah owed to Babcock individually, or as trustee. The witness remembers Babcock said, after the statement was made, add sixty-two cents for recording the deed, which made the sum inserted as the consideration in the deed. Nehemiah hesitated to sign the deed, when Babcock said, he can have the land again, at any time he shall pay the debts secured by it.

The answer avers, when the deed was executed, the defendant gave up the notes of Nehemiah held in his own right, and either surrendered them to him or destroyed them. But it is proved by the same witness that he did neither. These notes were given to the witness without explaining to whom they belonged. Witness supposed they belonged to the estate of Nehemiah Wyman, sen.

The witness says, the property, at the time it was sold, was worth thirteen or fourteen thousand dollars, and that it was sold greatly below its value.

The bill charges, that the defendant promised William Wyman, acting for his brother, that he would come to an account with Nehemiah for the price of the land, and pay him the proceeds of sales. This is denied in the answer. William Wyman swears, that on the 8th of November, 1851, he showed to Babcock the memorandum of the sums named, to secure the payment of which the deed was executed. He was much embarrassed, and admitted the handwriting was his son's, then \*deceased. He then [ \* 297 ] expressed a willingness to settle it up, and asked the witness, how shall this be done? Witness replied. that he should first charge Nehemiah with all his notes and interest, and then credit him with the proceeds of the land, and what he received from the land, with interest, and be allowed a fair compensation for his trouble. He then said, I can't tell how much I have received from



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the land, but we will leave it to two good men; and that he would give his note for what should be due.

A short time after this, Babcock told witness that he had consulted counsel, who advised him to pay the amount due the estate of Nehemiah, sen., and no more; and this he offered to do, if the witness would execute a bond of indemnity against any farther claim. He said that he had been advised, as the deed was absolute on its face, and no writing showed that the land was conveyed in security of a debt, the obligation could not be enforced.

The witness signified to Babcock, some time before the sale of the land, that he would redeem it for his brother.

Nehemiah Wyman, having transferred all his interest to the complainant, was examined as a witness, who stated, at the time he executed the deed to Babcock, he owed him, as an individual, as executor and agent, the sum of \$2,033.87, which included sixty-two cents for recording the deed; and that sum was stated as the consideration in the deed. Of this sum, only \$408.18 and interest, were due to Babcock in his individual capacity.

In his answer, the defendant states that the conveyance was made in payment of the sums due him personally; that he did not cancel the notes held by him as executor or trustee, because he was not satisfied that he should receive enough from the land to pay those debts. But the proof shows, that the debt due him as executor and agent, and also his individual debt, were all included in the consideration named in the deed.

The defendant made no advance to the witness, on the note and mortgage for twelve hundred dollars; but, at the date of the subsequent conveyance, the defendant had advanced to him \$400.08, and \$8.10, which, as above stated, constituted the debt due to the defendant on his personal account.

The conveyance was made to the defendant, the witness swears, with the express understanding that Babcock was to have the entire management of the land, so as to apply the proceeds in payment of the interest, and witness was to have the land again on paying the sums specified. He was induced to make the conveyance by the urgent request of his brother William, and Babcock; [ \* 298 ] his brother told him, if he did not \* make it, he would not assist him in his pecuniary matters. On the execution of the deed, none of the notes held by Babcock were canceled, or surrendered to the witness; but they are still held against him.

The witness says that Babcock promised to keep an account of the receipts of the land conveyed to him; but in his answer he says

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he kept no account, "because the land and rents and profits were his own, without any liability to account to any one."

Such a transaction as set out in the bill, between brothers-in-law, in the nature of things might be supposed to have taken place in the mutual confidence of the parties; and in the final adjustment there should be no evasions or subterfuges to gain an advantage. So far as regards the deed under consideration, all the material allegations of the bill are proved, and all the material averments of the answer seem to be unfounded. In coming to this conclusion, we do not rest alone on the witnesses, Nehemiah and William Wyman. There are strong circumstances which corroborate the witnesses, and satisfy the mind beyond a reasonable doubt.

In his answer, the defendant avers that the land was conveyed to him in payment of the sums due him personally. It appears from the oaths of both the Wymans that this is not correct; and, in addition, it is shown by the memorandum made out at the time, stating the sums for which the land was conveyed, in the handwriting of the son of the defendant.

Taking the statement of the defendant as true, that he did not intend to make himself responsible for the debt due to him as executor and agent at the time the deed was executed, presents him in an unfavorable light. The land for which he received a deed from Nehemiah Wyman, he was aware, had been previously mortgaged to secure the debt in his hands as executor of Francis Wyman. Could he have carried out this declared intention, he would have been unfaithful to the trust committed to him.

William Wyman seems to be a man of business. He drew the conveyance from his brother Nehemiah to his brother-in-law Babcock, and he took, in other respects, an active agency in the transaction; and he states the facts as alleged in the bill, and his statement is in every respect corroborated by his brother Nehemiah; and although the trust is denied in the answer, there are circumstances in the case which go strongly to establish it.

The defendant admitted all the facts to William Wyman, and promised to settle the account, and spoke of the principles on which it should be adjusted, but eventually he took refuge \* under the statutes of frauds, of limitations, and [ \* 299 ] the lapse of time. We think there can be no reasonable doubt that the deed in controversy was intended to be a mortgage. And this brings us to the second point of inquiry:

Can the trust be established by parol testimony?

If the doctrine of this court is to be adhered to, as laid down in the case of *Russell v. Southard*, (12 How. 154,) this is not an open

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question. In that case the court say: "To insist on what was really a mortgage, as a sale, is in equity a fraud." And in *Conway v. Alexander*, (7 Cranch, 238,) Chief Justice Marshall says: "Having made these observations on the deed itself, the court will proceed to examine those extrinsic circumstances which are to determine whether it was a sale or a mortgage." In *Morris v. Nixon*, (1 How. 126,) the court say: "The charge against Nixon is substantially a fraudulent attempt to convert that into an absolute sale, which was originally meant to be a security for a loan. It is in this view of the case that the evidence is admitted to ascertain the truth of the transaction, though the deed be absolute on its face."

In *Edrington v. Harper*, (3 J. J. Marshall, 655,) the court say: "The fact that the real transaction between the parties was a borrowing and lending, will, whenever or however it may appear, show that a deed absolute on its face was intended as a security for money; and whenever it can be ascertained to be a security for money, it is only a mortgage, however artfully it may be disguised."

In *Jenkins v. Eldredge*, (3 Story's Rep. 293,) Mr. Justice Story said: In 4 Kent, 143, (5th edit.,) it is declared, "a deed absolute upon the face of it, and though registered as a deed, will be valid and effectual as a mortgage between the parties, if it was intended by them to be merely a security for a debt. And this would be the case, though the defeasance was by an agreement resting in parol; for parol evidence is admissible to show that an absolute deed was intended as a mortgage, and that the defeasance had been omitted by fraud or mistake." In 2 Sumner's Rep. 228, 232-'3, Judge Story said: "It is the same, if it be omitted by design upon mutual confidence between the parties; for the violation of such an agreement would be a fraud of the most flagrant kind, originating in an open breach of trust against conscience and justice."

In *Foy v. Foy*, (2 Hayward, 141:) "In North Carolina, it is said the law on this subject is the same as the English law was before the statute of frauds, and parol declarations of trust are valid." "Where a testator gave by will all his estate to his wife, having confidence that she would dispose of it according to his [ \* 300 ] views communicated to her, and it being alleged \* that the testator, at the time of making the will, desired his wife to give the whole of the property to B, and that she promised to do it, it was held, that the allegation being proved, a trust would be created as to the whole of the property in favor of B." (*Podmore v. Gunning*, 7 Simons, 644.)

Parol proof is admissible to show fraud, and consequently a

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resulting trust, in a deed absolute on its face, notwithstanding any denial by the answer. (*Lloyd v. Spillote*, 2 *Atk. Rep.* 150; *Ross v. Newall*, 1 *Wash. Rep.* 14; *Watkins v. Stockett*, 6 *Har. and Johnson*, 435; *Strong v. Stewart*, 4 *John. Ch. Rep.* 167; *English v. Lane*, 1 *Porter's Ala. Rep.* 318.)

In *Boyd v. McLean*, (1 *John. Ch. Rep.* 582,) it was held, after an examination of the cases, "that a resulting trust might be established by parol proof, not only against the face of the deed itself, but in opposition to the answer of the nominal purchasers denying the trust, and even after the death of such purchaser." The statute of frauds in Rhode Island contains no exception in favor of resulting trusts, but Mr. Justice Story considered the exception immaterial, for it has been deemed merely affirmative of the general law. (1 *Sumner*, 187.)

Where a trustee misapplies the fund, it may be followed, however it may have been invested, by parol, as between the parties, or a purchaser with notice. So, where an estate was purchased in the name of one person, and the consideration came from another, a resulting trust may be established by parol—and in all cases where there is a resulting trust.

In *Hayworth v. Worthington*, (5 *Black.* 361,) it was held that parol evidence is admissible to prove that a bill of sale of goods, absolute on its face, was intended by the parties to be only a mortgage. The court say these decisions are founded upon the assumption that the admission of such evidence is necessary for the prevention of fraud. (*Cas. Temp. Talbot*, 62; *King v. Newman*, 2 *Munf.* 40; *Strong v. Stewart*, 4 *John. Ch. Rep.* 167; *Dunham v. Dey*, 15 *John. R.* 555; *Walton v. Cronly's Adm'r*, 14 *Wend.* 63; *Van Buren v. Olmstead*, 5 *Paige*, 9.)

In the case of *Overton v. Bigelow*, (3 *Yerger*, 513,) it was held, "that an absolute bill of sale of negroes may be converted into a mortgage by a parol agreement to allow the conveyor to redeem; and this agreement may be inferred from the price given, and the mode of dealing between the parties."

The case of *Walker v. Locke et al.* (5 *Cushing*, 90,) is considered as having no application to the case before us. It is well known that until within a few years the courts of Massachusetts had no chancery jurisdiction. The jurisdiction, when first conferred by statute, was limited to cases of specific \* execution [ \* 301 ] of contracts and trusts, not including fraud, as a ground of relief. Within some one or two years past, the jurisdiction has been extended to frauds, but this has been done since the decision in the case above cited.

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If the decision had been made since the extension of the jurisdiction beyond the construction of the local statutes, we should consider it only as the decision of a highly respectable and learned court, and not as a rule of decision for this court.

It is admitted that the authorities on the question before us are conflicting in this country and in England; but as this court in several cases have decided the point, and it is now and has been for several years past a rule of decision, we are not prepared to balance the State authorities, with the view of ascertaining on which side the scale preponderates.

The third point regards the lapse of time and the statute of limitations.

In his answer, the defendant avers that the pleadings show a possession by him of more than twenty years before the institution of this suit, and that that possession has never been disturbed; and also that the proceeds of sale were received more than six years before the bill was filed, and these facts are relied on to bar the right of the complainant.

It is clear that the statute cannot constitute a bar in the present case. Courts of equity apply the statute by analogy to cases at law; but in this case, the trust being established, there was no adverse possession in favor of which the statute could run. The possession was consistent with the intentions of the parties, until the fraud was discovered, in 1851. Nor can the statute bar the right of the complainant to the proceeds of the land, as Babcock was bound to apply these to the payment of interest on the debt, and in discharge of the principal.

The decree of the circuit court is affirmed with costs.

Mr. Justice CATRON and Mr. Justice CAMPBELL dissented.

Mr. Justice CATRON dissenting.

The opinion just pronounced maintains that a deed in fee, without conditions, and made in that form, according to an agreement of the parties at the time, may be proved to have been a mortgage by parol evidence, establishing that a defeasance was part of the agreement when the absolute deed was executed; but that it was left out by design. And that this parol proof may be made, after the lapse of more than twenty years from the date of the [ \* 302 ] deed before the grantee was sued; \* he having been in possession of the land conveyed, holding it under the deed from its date up to the time when the suit was brought.

The defendant (among other things) relied on the statute of

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frauds as a defense to the suit. Lord Hardwicke lays down the rule (in *Montacute v. Maxwell*, 1 P. Williams, 618) to be, that where there was no fraud or mistake in the original transaction, and the word or promise of the defendant was relied on, the statute of frauds declares such promise void, and equity will not interfere. And in this doctrine I understand the supreme judicial court of Massachusetts to concur. (*Walker v. Locke*, 5 Cush. 90.)

The effect of the defeasance here set up, by parol evidence, is, that it defeats the absolute deed, and makes it void on payment of a sum of money. On general principles the rule is, that where there is a *written contract*, all antecedent propositions, negotiations, and parol interlocutions, on the same subject, are deemed to be merged in such contract. (1 Story Com. p. 173, sec. 160; 2 Story, p. 286, sec. 1,018.)

There must be fraud or mistake in making the agreement, if it can be reformed. (Id. sec. 157, p. 169.)

I think the parol proof was inadmissible both by the statute of frauds of Massachusetts, and according to the general rule referred to; and that the decree should be reversed, and the bill dismissed.

Mr. Justice CAMPBELL dissenting.

The defendant, in the year 1828, entered upon the land conveyed to him by Nehemiah Wyman, and retained it until 1844. He then sold it as his own property, and appropriated the price to his own use. During this whole period, there was no act on the part of Wyman from which the relation of a mortgager or debtor can be inferred, and no account was rendered by the defendant, nor was any *act* performed by him inconsistent with his deed.

The evidence relied on to engraft a trust on this deed consists of conversations reported by Nehemiah Wyman, the debtor, and his brother William, as contemporaneous with the deed, and other conversations reported by William Wyman as occurring in 1844 and 1851; and also the statements of the answer.

No intercourse between Nehemiah Wyman and the defendant took place between 1828 and 1851, directly or mediately, relative to this subject.

The witness, Nehemiah Wyman, is not, in my opinion, a competent witness. This suit is brought by his son upon an \* assignment made after the controversy had commenced, [ \* 303 ] and with the acknowledged purpose of using his father as a witness.

It was found that sufficient evidence did not exist to support the



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claim, and machinery was resorted to, calculated to introduce the evils of champerty and maintenance.

The witness sold his claim, with a concession to the assignee to employ him as a witness to establish it.

Such a practice holds out to parties a strong temptation to commit perjury. (*Bell v. Smith*, 5 B. and C. 188, J. Bayley's Opinion; *Maury v. Mason*, 8 Part. 212; *Clifton v. Sharpe*, 15 Ala. R. 618; 1 Penn. R. 214; 12 Pet. 140.)

The testimony of Edward Wyman is open to much observation; and I feel entirely indisposed to rest a decree upon his evidence. Nor do I see intrinsic difficulties in the inconsistencies of the answer. I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that nothing has been done between these parties for above twenty-three years inconsistent with the relations of vendor and vendee, or consistent with the relations of a creditor and debtor, except the detention of the evidence of the original debt by the defendant, and the most important part of that evidence was canceled in 1830 by him.

I dissent from the opinion of the court in reference to the jurisdiction of the circuit court of the United States in Massachusetts. It is admitted that, in the courts of Massachusetts, this trust could not be incorporated into the deed. The statute of frauds prevents it. (*Walker v. Locke*, 5 Cush. 90.)

This statute constitutes a rule of property for the State. In the present case, the subject of the suit is a contract made in Massachusetts, by citizens of that State, and affecting the title to real property there. In my opinion, the statute law of Massachusetts furnishes a rule of decision to the courts of the United States.

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WILLIAM BYERS, Appellant, v. FRANCIS SURGET.

19 H. 303.

FRAUD IN SELLING A LARGE AMOUNT OF LAND FOR A VERY SMALL SUM ON A JUDGMENT FOR COSTS—ATTORNEY.

An attorney for a defendant who had pleaded successfully a subsequent discharge in bankruptcy, taxed defendant's costs for the clerk, had execution issued on a judgment for the costs, and levied upon lands of non-resident plaintiff worth fifty thousand dollars, and bought them in for nine dollars and thirteen cents, directing the levy and urging the sale against the wishes of the sheriff: Held, to be a fraud and extortion, and the sale, after conveyance, set aside as void, in chancery.

APPEAL from the circuit court for the eastern district of Arkansas.  
The case is fully stated in the opinion.

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*Mr. Lawrence*, for appellee.

No counsel for appellant.

\* Mr. Justice DANIEL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 304 ]

The appellee, Francis Surget, a citizen of the State of Mississippi, instituted his suit in equity in the circuit court of the United States for the eastern district of Arkansas, against the appellant, the object of which suit was to annul as fraudulent and void a sale of lands belonging to the appellee, made by the sheriff of Jackson, in Arkansas, on the 18th of May, 1846. These lands, situated in the county and State above mentioned, are described in the pleadings according to the public surveys, amounting to more than fourteen thousand acres, and estimated in value at from forty or seventy thousand dollars, and were sold by the sheriff in satisfaction of a claim for \$39, and conveyed to the appellant for the sum of nine dollars thirteen and one-half cents.

The circuit court having pronounced the sale and conveyance fraudulent and void, and decreed a surrender and reconveyance of the lands by the appellant to the appellee, the former party has appealed from that decree to this court.

The facts of this cause, as collated from the pleadings, and as established by the proofs, are substantially as follows:

The appellee, during the year 1835, separately, and in his individual right, entered and purchased of the government of the United States, at their land office at Batesville, in the State of Arkansas, a number of tracts or parcels of land, situated in the county of Jackson, in the State aforesaid, all of which are known and designated on the plats of the public surveys, and are enumerated and set forth in the bill. In the same year, (1835,) about the 10th of November, the appellee, together with John Ker, Stephen Duncan, and William B. Duncan, formed a partnership under the name and style of William B. Duncan & Co., and, in the name and behalf of that firm, entered and purchased of the United States, at their land office at Batesville, various other tracts, lots, and parcels of land, lying in the same county and State, known and designated on the plats of the public surveys, and described and set out in the bill. Some time in the year 1836, the partnership of \* William B. Duncan & Co. was, by mutual consent, [ \* 305 ] dissolved; and the property, real and personal, belonging to the firm, including the purchases and entries of land made by them, was by like consent divided, and the portion of each partner allotted to him, and by him held in severalty. The portions assigned and allotted, under this distribution, to Stephen Duncan

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and William B. Duncan, as members of the partnership of William B. Duncan & Co., are particularly set out and described in the bill. Subsequently to the dissolution of the partnership of William B. Duncan & Co., and to the transfer to each partner of his respective rights and interest therein, Stephen Duncan and William B. Duncan, by deeds bearing date, the one on the 29th of December, 1836, and the other on the 23d of March, 1837, sold and conveyed to the appellee in fee simple, together with sundry other tracts and parcels of land, the lands, lots, and parcels, before mentioned as having been transferred and assigned to said Stephen and William B., as members of the firm of William B. Duncan & Co., all of which lots and parcels of land, so conveyed to the appellee by Stephen and William B. Duncan, as well as the portion thereof belonging to the appellee, as a member of the firm of William B. Duncan & Co., and the several lots and parcels of land originally and separately entered and purchased by the appellee in his own right, were included in the levy and sale impeached by the bill.

In the year 1840, four years after the dissolution of the firm of William B. Duncan & Co., an action was instituted in the name of that firm, by William B. Duncan, in the circuit court of Jackson county, in the State of Arkansas, against one Noadiah Marsh, for a breach of covenant; and in that suit, under the plea of a subsequent discharge in bankruptcy, the court gave judgment in favor of the defendant for costs of suit.

The bill charges that this suit instituted against Marsh was posterior in time to the dissolution of the partnership, and was commenced and prosecuted without the authority or knowledge of the other members of the recent partnership, who all resided beyond the limits of the State of Arkansas; and further avers, that the first knowledge of the existence of the suit on the part of the appellee was imparted to him by a communication informing him of the sale of his land. This allegation in the bill with respect to the period at which the suit against Marsh was instituted, and with respect also to the person by whom instituted, and the ignorance on the part of the appellee of the institution of that suit, is fully sustained by the deposition of William B. Duncan, and by the facts that the deeds from the other partners to the appellee, [ \* 306 ] executed \* after the dissolution, bear date in the years 1836 and 1837; the action at law against Marsh not having been commenced until 1840, September 5th.

But should it be conceded that the partnership was in full existence at the time of the institution of the suit against Marsh, and that the suit had been ordered or sanctioned by the firm, yet a judg-

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ment for costs against them, upon a ground which controverted neither the justice nor the legality of their claim, presents an anomaly in judicial proceedings, as irreconcilable with reason as it is believed to be without precedent.

Upon this extraordinary judgment, the appellant, as the attorney for the defendant in the inferior court, assumed to himself the power to tax the costs adjudged to the defendant; to tax them not in the capacity of clerk, the agent created by law for the performance of that service, nor in that of the legal deputy or subordinate of that officer, but, as it has been asserted, as a sort of *amicus clerici*, and with equal benevolence, or in order to remedy the ignorance and imbecility which, by way of justification of the appellant's acts, it is attempted to be shown, characterized the ministers of the law in that unfortunate locality, assumed to himself the power and the right not only of selecting the final process, but of prescribing also the description and the quantity of the property which he chose to have seized in satisfaction of that process; of furnishing a list of the parcels and amount which he chose to have thus seized; of ordering the sheriff to levy upon the whole of what he had so described; of preparing himself and furnishing to the officer such advertisements for the sale of the property levied upon as he approved; of requiring of the sheriff, under peril of responsibility for refusal, towards the satisfaction of an execution for thirty-nine dollars and ten cents, peremptorily to make sale of more than fourteen thousand acres of land, estimated by the witnesses from forty to seventy thousand dollars; and finally, under a proceeding irregular in its origin, commenced by himself, and by him controlled and managed to its consummation, of becoming the purchaser of the property estimated as above, for the sum of nine dollars thirteen and one-half cents.

Such is the history of a transaction which the appellant asks of this court to sanction; and it seems pertinent here to inquire, under what system of civil polity, under what code of law or ethics, a transaction like that disclosed by the record in this case can be excused, or even palliated? To the appellant must necessarily be imputed full knowledge of this transaction; he was the attorney for the defendant in the State court; he is shown to have been not only the adviser, but \* virtually the executor, of [ \* 307 ] every step taken for the enforcement of the judgment of that court; and as a lawyer, it is reasonable to presume that he must have comprehended the nature and effects of the measures adopted by him and at his instance. The bill impeaches these

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measures as being contrived by the appellant for purposes of fraud and oppression, as is betrayed—

1. By the anomalous character of the judgment procured by the appellant, without notice or knowledge on the part of the appellee.

2. By the fact, that the process sued out upon the judgment at law was not made out by the only officer legally authorized for that purpose, but was calculated, and drawn up, and determined, and written out, by the appellant himself, and by his authority and direction delivered to the sheriff, who was ordered by this same party on what particular property and to what amount to levy the execution.

3. By the facts, that whatever notices or advertisements may have been given or prepared previously to the sale of the lands levied upon, were prepared not by the sheriff, but by the appellant; and that such as were prepared by him were not published by the sheriff in the mode prescribed by the law, previously to the sale of lands under execution.

4. By the wanton excessiveness of the levy insisted on by the appellant; this being an abuse of the process of the court, and evidence of a fraudulent design, with a view to incite suspicion, and to deter purchasers by reason of that suspicion, and by offering larger portions of property than many persons would be willing or able to purchase.

5. By the peremptory demand upon the sheriff, and in opposition to the remonstrances of this officer, and under threats, in the event of his refusal, to force a sale of this large amount of property, under circumstances calculated to insure its ruinous sacrifice.

6. The gross inadequacy of consideration given by the appellant for this large property, an effect produced by his own fraudulent contrivances.

The ground upon which the defendant below, the appellant here, has rested his case, may in substance be reduced to the two following positions:

1. The strength of his legal title acquired under the execution and sale, and under the conveyance from the sheriff, which execution, sale, and conveyance, he alleges were fair, and not fraudulent; and

2. That sacrifices of land in the section of the State in which this sale occurred, similar to that complained of, were usual in sales under execution.

[ \* 308 ]     \* With respect to the effect of the judgment at law, and of the proceedings taken for its enforcement, it is insisted, in the answer of the appellant, that this judgment having been

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rendered by a court of competent authority, and still remaining unreversed, neither the validity of that judgment nor the proceedings in virtue thereof can now be questioned.

It is true, that with respect to the regularity of that judgment, or of any legal errors in obtaining it, this court or the circuit court could not take cognizance, nor exercise any appellate power for its reversal; and in any collateral attempt at law to impeach that judgment, it must be regarded as binding and operative. But with any fraudulent conduct of parties in obtaining a judgment, or in attempting to avail themselves thereof, this court can regularly, as could the circuit court, take cognizance. Such a proceeding is within the legitimate province of courts of equity, and constitutes an extensive ground of their jurisdiction. The true and intrinsic character of proceedings, as well in courts of law as *in pais*, is alike subject to the scrutiny of a court of equity, which will probe, and either sustain or annul them, according to their real character, and as the ends of justice may require.

With reference to the conduct of the appellant, in procuring and enforcing the judgment at law, that conduct has been, by the answer of the appellant and by the argument of his counsel, sought to be sustained, upon ground that, as attorney for Marsh, the appellant had the power and the right to control the judgment, and to carry it into effect. The power and right thus claimed for the appellant, like every other right and power, are bounded by rules of law and justice, and by consistency with the rights of others. So far as it was necessary to maintain and enforce the legitimate interests of Marsh, it was unquestionably within the competency of his attorney to interpose; but he could not, in pursuance of whatever he may have fancied legitimate, or of whatever he may have deemed judicious or promotive of advantage to his client or himself, usurp the authority and functions of officers on whom the law had devolved its just administration, and by that the preservation of the rights of the citizen.

The offices of clerk and sheriff were never designed to be mere names, nor to be engines and prétexts, to be used at the will of any one. By what authority, then, could the appellant assume the functions of both clerk and sheriff; tax such costs as he deemed proper; order the seizure of property to an amount entirely arbitrary, as his cupidity or indiscretion might incline him, and command peremptorily the sale of the whole subject thus illegally and rapaciously seized upon, without the \* slightest [ \* 309 ] reference to the value of the subject, in comparison with the demand to be satisfied, and then to become himself the posses-



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sor of the subject thus sacrificed by his own irregular and oppressive conduct, for a pretended consideration so trivial that it may be considered as nominal merely?

In justification or in excuse for this assumption, it has been alleged and relied on by the appellant, (though the position is entirely unsustained by proof,) that it was rendered necessary by the ignorance of those officers to whom the duties of clerk and sheriff had been assigned by law; and had become a common practice in the particular part of the country where this proceeding occurred. If the position thus taken be true in fact, it rather aggravates than extenuates the wrong complained of, as it shows that, by the ignorance or the corruption of those officers of the law, the rights of the complainant had been surrendered to the mercy of one having a direct interest to invade those rights. It evinces, moreover, if true, a practice in a profession heretofore deemed enlightened and honorable, highly calculated to bring that profession into merited disrepute.

Upon the question of the illegality in the sale for want of notice by advertisement, it has been insisted by the appellant that the bill contains no charge with respect to such illegality, and that therefore no proofs as to that point can be admitted.

It is undoubtedly the rule in equity, as well as at law, that the proofs must correspond with the allegations, and that evidence irrelevant or inapplicable to the latter will be regarded as immaterial. The bill in this case is less searchingly and minutely framed than it might have been on this particular point, yet it is considered as being sufficiently comprehensive, and as sufficiently specific at the same time, to embrace this point, and to justify proofs in relation thereto.

It alleges as illegal and unwarrantable the taxing of the costs, the writing of the execution, the writing of the list and description of the lands required to be levied on, and the notices of sale by the appellant; the manner of publishing or putting those notices and the proceedings under them at the sale—all as being unwarranted by law, and as having been concocted and carried out in fraud; all these allegations it was competent to the appellee to prove. The answer of the appellant—after a general denial of fraud and unfairness, and after admitting the taxing of the costs, the writing of the execution, the description of the land to be levied upon, the directions of the sheriff, and the preparation of the advertisements, all by himself—next insists upon the regularity and propriety of all these acts. He then proceeds to aver the performance of  
[ \* 310 ] every \* prerequisite of the law with respect to such sales.

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After enumerating these prerequisites in detail, he endeavors to establish them by evidence. He says that the sheriff advertised the lands for twenty days in three of the most public places in each township of the county, in conformity with the statute; and he introduces the evidence of the sheriff and of other witnesses to maintain these averments.

But in contravention of these statements are, first, the admission of the appellant that *he himself*, and not the sheriff, prepared the notices of sale; and, secondly, the evidence of the sheriff introduced and relied on by the appellant, so far from showing a compliance with the requisites of the law, establishes the fact that these were violated and disregarded; for the sheriff declares that he took the list and the description of the property, and the notices prepared by the appellant; and this officer admits that he did not put up advertisements, either in number or locality, as required by law, nor could he swear to such a proceeding by him. He says it was his practice to set up advertisements in places in which it was convenient for him to do so, and to hand over other notices to persons in whom he had confidence.

Here, then, is proof, supplied by the appellant, that the law had not been complied with. The acts of an official deputy are evidence of the acts of his principal, and are binding on all who fall within the legal scope of those acts. But it is not perceived how the rights of suitors can be at all dependent upon the unofficial and individual confidence of one officer, even when that confidence may not have been misplaced. In this case, there is no proof that it has been fulfilled; for no person shows that the notices had been in fact put up and published according to the statute. The mere *belief*, either of the sheriff or any other person, can have no operation where the law calls for full legal proof.

The objections here stated cannot be deemed narrow or technical with reference to a case like the present—a case presenting no claim to favor either in law or in equity; a case in which the respondent was and is bound to pursue the hair line of legal and formal strictness, and from which, if he deviate in never so small a degree, he is doomed to fall. The conduct of the defendant, in all that he has done himself, and in all that he has exacted of others, is essentially important in this case as evidence of the *quo animo* with which this transaction was begun, prosecuted, and consummated. Another pregnant proof of the design of the appellant to grasp and to retain what no principle of liberality or equity could warrant, is the fact, clearly established, of his refusal after the sale to accept from \* the appellee, for the redemption of his lands [ \* 311 ]

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so glaringly sacrificed, a sum of money considerably exceeding in amount the judgment for costs, with all the expenses incidental to the carrying that judgment into effect. The appellant, by his irregular and unconscientious contrivances, achieved what he conceived to be an immense speculation; and he determined to avail himself of it, regardless of its injustice and ruinous consequences to the appellee.

To meet the objection made to the sale in this case, founded on the inadequacy of the price at which the land was sold, it is insisted that inadequacy of consideration, singly, cannot amount to proof of fraud. This position, however, is scarcely reconcilable with the qualification annexed to it by the courts; namely, unless such inadequacy be so gross as to shock the conscience; for this qualification implies necessarily the affirmation, that if the inadequacy be of a nature so gross as to shock the conscience, it will amount to proof of fraud. Again, in answer to the same objection, it is insisted, that whatever presumption arising from inadequacy of consideration may be permitted with respect to transactions strictly limited to vendor and vendee, no unfavorable inference from that cause is permissible with respect to sales made under judicial process. Certainly the facts that sales are made by the officers or ministers of the law, and under its authority, may properly weaken the usual presumption arising from gross inadequacy; but to declare that such inadequacy, connected with other facts and circumstances evincing fraud or unfairness, could never be regarded as affecting sales under process, would be as rational as the assertion that process of law could never be abused, and that the ministers of the law must necessarily be intelligent and upright, and incapable of being ever willingly or unwittingly made the instruments of fraud or oppression. But the transaction now under review can with no show of propriety be tested by the single fact of inadequacy of consideration, however gross and extraordinary that inadequacy has been. We perceive in this transaction other ingredients that have been mingled therewith by the appellant, that give to the objection of inadequacy an effect that, standing isolated and alone, could not be ascribed to or deduced from it.

Thus, when we advert to the irregular and extraordinary character of the judgment procured through the agency of the appellant—to his eagerness, that could not await the action of the officer of the court—his assumption of the functions of the clerk, in taxing the costs, and in writing out the execution—his preparation and delivery to the sheriff of a description and list of the lands [ \* 312 ] of the appellee, amounting to more than fourteen \* thou-

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sand acres—his requisition of a seizure of the whole of those lands in satisfaction of the sum of thirty-nine dollars—his inflexible demand upon the sheriff, under threats of prosecution, to expose to sale the entire levy—his purchase of all these lands for the sum of nine dollars and thirteen and a half cents—and his refusal after the sale and purchase to accept, in redemption of these lands so sacrificed, a sum of money tendered to him much more than equal to the costs, with all the expenses incident to the judgment; when all these acts on the part of the appellant are adverted to, they impel irresistibly to the conclusion, that the gross inadequacy of consideration in the sale and purchase of these lands was the premeditated result which the proceedings by the appellant were put in practice to insure. They betray that *malus dolus* in which the design of the appellant was conceived, which appears to have presided over and regulated the progress of the design from its birth to its consummation; to which design the appellant has tenaciously clung, in the seeming expectation that it was beyond the corrective powers of law or justice.

Upon the whole case, we are constrained to view the entire transaction impeached by the appellee as one that cannot be sustained without the subversion of the principles and rules either of legal or moral justice. We accordingly approve the decision of the circuit court in so regarding it, and order that decree to be affirmed.

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OLIVER and DANIEL R. GARRISON, Appellants, v. THE MEMPHIS INSURANCE COMPANY.

19 H. 312.

PERILS OF THE SEA, DANGERS OF THE RIVER: THESE DO NOT INCLUDE FIRE.

1. A bill of lading which exempted the owner of the vessel (a steamboat) from perils or dangers of the river, does not exonerate him from loss by fire.
2. If the bill excepts "dangers of the river" and "unavoidable accidents," he is not responsible for loss by fire, where no fault is shown.
3. It is not competent to show by parol testimony that the words "dangers of the river" are generally understood to include injury from fire.
4. An insurance company which pays the loss to the owner of the cargo can sue the owner of the vessel for the loss, and can sue in chancery, where there are many bills of lading, each of which would require a separate suit at law.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the district of Missouri, and the case is well stated in the opinion.

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*Mr. Ewing*, for appellants.

*Mr. Geyer*, for appellees.

[ \* 313 ] \* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court.

[ \* 314 ] \* The appellee filed a bill in the circuit court against the appellants, the owners of the steamboat *Convoy*, a vessel formerly employed in the navigation of the Mississippi river, and which, in 1849, was consumed by fire, with a cargo of cotton.

The appellee is an insurance corporation of Memphis, Tennessee, and insured eleven hundred and fifty-two bales of the cotton belonging to this cargo from loss by fire; this insurance was effected upon fifteen distinct parcels, and shipped mostly from Tennessee to a number of consignees in New Orleans. The company adjusted the losses with the assured on their policies, and bring this suit for reimbursement, by enforcing the claims of the shippers against the owners. *These* answer the bill by a denial of their legal responsibility for the loss. They maintain that fire is one of the perils of the river Mississippi; that all the bills of lading that exempt the carrier from a loss by perils of the river, imply fire as one of those perils; that the variations in the bills of lading, some including "fire," and "unavoidable accidents" as well as fire, are referable to the fact that they are preferred by different shippers, who have different forms for expressing the same legal consequence. That they all understand that a carrier is exempt from a liability for fire on a bill of lading exonerating him from the risks of the river.

It was admitted on the hearing that the boat was consumed, without any negligence or fault of the owners, their agents, or servants. The circuit court excused the owners from losses, where the bills of lading contained an exception of fire or unavoidable accidents, but condemned them on the others, to satisfy the demand of the company.

It cannot be denied that the appellants are responsible, according to the strictness of the common-law rule determining the carrier's liability, unless an accidental fire is one of the exceptions included in the term "perils of the river." These words include risks arising from natural accidents peculiar to the river, which do not happen by the intervention of man, nor are to be prevented by human prudence; and have been extended to comprehend losses arising from some irresistible force or overwhelming power which no ordinary skill could anticipate or evade. (*Jones v. Pitcher*, 3 S. and P. 136; 4 Yerg. 48; 5 Yerg. 82; *Schooner Reeside*, 2 Sum. 568.)

They exonerate a carrier from a liability for a loss arising from an attack of pirates, or from a collision of ships, when there is no

negligence or fault on the part of the master and crew. Latterly, the courts have shown an indisposition to extend the comprehension of these words. The destruction of a \* vessel [ \* 315 ] by worms at sea is not accounted a loss by the perils of the sea; nor was a damage from bilging, arising in consequence of the insufficiency of tackle for getting her from the dock; nor was damage occasioned to a vessel by her props being carried away by the tide while she was undergoing repairs on the beach, excused as falling within that exception. In *Laveroni v. Drury*, (8 Ex. R. 166,) a question arose whether a damage to a cargo of cheese, occasioned by rats, was within the exception of the dangers or accidents of the sea and navigation; and the continental and American authorities were cited to the barons of the exchequer, to show that it was, and that the carrier was excused, he having taken the usual and proper precautions against them.

That court decided otherwise, and say "the exception includes only a danger or accident of the sea or navigation, properly so called, (viz: one caused by the violence of the winds and waves, *a vis major*, acting upon a seaworthy and substantial ship,) and does not cover damage by rats, which is a kind of destruction not peculiar to the sea or navigation, or arising directly from it, but one to which such a commodity as cheese is equally liable in a warehouse on land as in a ship at sea." And the court conclude "that the liability of the master and owner of a general ship is *prima facie* that of a common carrier; but that his responsibility may be either enlarged or qualified by the terms of the bill of lading, if there be one; and that the question, whether the defendant is liable or not, is to be ascertained by this document when it exists." The principle of these cases establishes a liability against a carrier for a loss by fire arising from other than a natural cause, whether occurring on a steamboat accidentally, or communicated from another vessel or from the shore; and the fact that fire produces the motive power of the boat does not affect the case. (*New J. S. N. Co. v. Merchants' Bank*, 6 How. 344, 381; *Hale v. N. J. S. N. Co.*, 15 Conn. 539; *Singleton v. Hilliard*, 1 Strab. 203; *Gilmore v. Carman*, 1 S. and N. 279.)

In this suit, a witness was introduced, who claims to have been long familiar with the usages of the navigation and the river insurance risks of the Mississippi, and competent to testify in reference to the perils of that river. He says, "those are, sinking, by coming in collision with rocks, snags, or other boats or vessels, and fire; that the most common form of bills of lading contains the exceptions, perils of the river and fire; but that in many instances the



word fire is omitted, and he has not known an instance where the want of that word has created a difficulty in adjusting a loss, or was considered to give a claim against a boat on account of a [ \* 316 ] loss by fire." The first inquiry \*is, whether this evidence is admissible. In mercantile contracts, evidence is admissible to prove that the words in which the particular contract is expressed, in the particular trade to which the contract refers, are used in a peculiar sense, and different from that which they ordinarily import, and to annex incidents to written contracts, in respect to which they are silent, but which both parties probably contemplated, because usual in such contracts.

But although it is competent to explain what is ambiguous, and to introduce what is omitted, because sanctioned by usage, it is not competent to vary or contradict the terms of the contract. The exceptions in the bills of lading under consideration have been in use in policies of insurance and contracts of affreightment for a long period, and have acquired a distinct signification in the customs of merchants, and the opinions of professional men and courts. It would be surprising if any particular or artificial meaning was attached to them in the customs of the Mississippi river, contrary to, or distinguishable from, that which existed elsewhere in the community of shippers and merchants. In this case, the evidence fails to establish any peculiar sense of these words, as appropriate to the locality where the parties to this contract reside and made their contract. The evidence rather serves to show that the witness did not recognize the liability of a carrier, as it exists in the common law, and was ready to acquit him of responsibility for losses to which he did not contribute, by the negligence or fault either of himself or his agents. In *Turney v. Wilson*, (7 Yerg. 340)—a case decided in the State from which the shipments described in the bill were chiefly made—evidence was offered to show there was an implied contract recognized in the usages of shippers and merchants, which had prevailed from the first settlement of the country, to exempt the carrier from losses, except those proceeding from negligence or dishonesty, to explain or construe a bill of lading of the common form. The court decided, that the dangers of the river were such as could not have been prevented by human skill and foresight, and were incident to river navigation. That all evidence was irrelevant that did not show that the loss was occasioned by the act of God, the enemies of the country, or dangers of the river; that the custom could not affect or in anywise alter the written contract of the parties, as contained in the bill of lading, as the language had a definite legal meaning which this custom could not

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change. A similar question arose in the case of the Schooner *Reese*, (2 Sum. 568,) where Justice Story condemns, in pointed language, the habit of admitting loose and inconclusive usages and customs \* “to outweigh the well-known and well- [\* 317] settled principles of law.” And in *Rogers v. Mechanics’ Insurance Co.*, (1 Story, 601,) he denies the authority of a usage of a particular port, in a particular trade, to limit or control or qualify the language of mercantile contracts, such as a policy of insurance. A usage such as is pleaded in this suit, if existing, must be notorious and certain, and have been uniform in its application and long established in practice. It must have been exhibited in the transactions of the individuals and corporations concerned, in conducting the business of shipments, transportation, and insurance, through the Mississippi valley.

If the evidence had established that policies of insurance there did not designate fire among the risks assumed; that the words “perils of the river” were used to include that risk, and losses by fire had been uniformly settled under that clause in the policy; that contracts of affreightment had been made and losses adjusted on the same conditions; that these usages had received the sanction of professional and judicial opinion in the States bordering that river—the cause of the appellants would have presented different considerations. The record contains nothing to exempt them from the legal rule of liability, as established by the common law. Seven of the bills of lading produced contain the exception, “perils of the river and fire;” three others add to the perils of the river, “unavoidable accidents;” and in these cases the circuit court exonerated the appellants from responsibility.

The appellants further contend that the insurance company is not subrogated to the claims of the shippers of the cotton, whose losses have been adjusted on their policies of insurance; or, if this is so, still their suit should have been at law, in the name of the assured—the remedy being adequate and complete. In *Randall v. Cochran*, (1 Vesey, sen. 98,) the chancellor replied to a similar objection, “that the plaintiff had the plainest equity that could be.” The person originally sustaining the loss was the owner; but, after satisfaction made to him, the insurer. And in *White v. Dabinson*, (14 Sim. 273,) an insurer enforced a lien on a judgment recovered by the assured for a loss, where the loss had been partially settled by him, on the policy. (*Monticello v. Morrison*, 17 How. 152.) These cases also show that an insurer may apply to equity whenever an impediment exists to the exercise of his legal remedy in the name of the assured.

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The bill discloses fifteen different contracts of affreightment, of a similar character, which have been adjusted by the appellees, and which form the subject of this suit.

[ \* 318 ] They have been joined in the same bill, and much \* inconvenience and vexation have been prevented. Without further inquiry, we think a sufficient ground for a resort to equity is disclosed.

Decree affirmed.

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THE COMMERCIAL MUTUAL MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY, Appellants,  
v. THE UNION MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY OF NEW YORK.

19 H. 318.

PAROL AGREEMENT TO INSURE—SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE DECREED IN EQUITY.

1. A parol agreement to make insurance, by executing policy next day, is valid, and can be enforced where all the particulars of the agreement are understood.
2. At common law such an agreement is valid, and there is nothing in the statute of the State of Massachusetts which renders it void.
3. A court of equity, in enforcing such a contract, may render a decree for the loss, where it has occurred before suit.
4. Where a president of an insurance company has been held out as possessing authority to make such contracts, and his authority is not denied in the answer, his agreement will be held binding on the company.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the district of Massachusetts, and the case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Curtis*, for appellants.

*Mr. Goodrich*, for appellees.

Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the district of Massachusetts, in a suit in equity, to compel the specific performance of a contract to make reinsurance on the ship *Great Republic*. The circuit court made a decree in favor of the complainants, and the respondents appealed.

It appears that the complainants, a corporation established in New York, having made insurance of the ship *Great Republic* to a large amount, authorized Charles W. Storey, at Boston, to apply for and obtain from either of the insurance companies there reinsurance to the extent of ten thousand dollars. Pursuant to this authority, on the 24th December, 1853, Mr. Storey made [ \* 319 ] application to the president of the defendant \* corporation for reinsurance, at the same time presenting a paper,

partly written and partly printed, as embodying the terms of the application. The paper was follows:

“Reinsurance is wanted by the Union Mutual Insurance Company, New York, for \$10,000, on the ship Great Republic, from December 24, 1853, at noon, for six months ensuing.

“This policy is to be subject to such risks, valuations, and condition, including risk of premium note, as are or may be taken by the said Union Mutual Insurance Company, and payment of loss to be made at the same time. 3 per cent.

“Binding, ————, *President*.

“NEW YORK, *December 24, 1853.*”

The president, after consultation with one of the directors of the company, declined to take the risk for a premium of three per cent., but offered to take it for three and a half per cent.

Mr. Storey replied, that was more than he was authorized to give, and left the office. He immediately apprised his principals, by a telegraphic dispatch, that the risk could be taken for three and a half per cent. for six months, or six per cent. a year. The reply, on the same day, was, “Do it for six months, privilege of canceling if sold.” This reply did not come to the hands of Mr. Storey until Monday, the 26th day of December, when he went to the office of the respondents, and found there the president of the company, but not any other person, as the day was generally observed, by merchants, bankers, and insurers, as a holiday, Christmas having fallen on Sunday.

Mr. Storey informed the president he was willing to pay three and a half per cent. for the reinsurance described in the proposal, took a pen and altered the three per cent. to three and a half per cent., by adding  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 on the paper, and it is admitted by the answer that the president thereupon assented to the terms contained in the paper, but informed Mr. Storey that no business was done at the office on that day, and that the next day he would attend to it. The president then took the paper and retained it.

To a special interrogatory contained in the bill, the defendants answer:

“That its president did assent to the terms and provisions in said paper, as the terms and provisions of a reinsurance to be completed and executed by this defendant, by the making and execution of a policy in due form, according to the requisitions of the laws of Massachusetts, and the by-laws of this defendant, but they were not assented to as a present insurance.”

\* Upon these facts, we are of opinion there was an agree- [\* 320] ment to reinsure according to the terms contained in the

proposal, concluded by and between Mr. Storey and the president at this interview on Monday the 26th of December. The paper contained every particular essential to a contract to make reinsurance. It ascertained the subject of insurance, the commencement and duration of the risk, the parties, the interest of the assured, and the premium; and for the special risks, the valuations, and conditions, it referred to the original contract of insurance made by the complainants, by reason of which they were seeking reinsurance.

On Saturday, the president had offered to contract in accordance with the paper, saving a difference of one-half per cent. on the premium.

It was argued that it could not be considered an acceptance on Monday of a continuing offer made on Saturday, because, when the complainants authorized Mr. Storey to give three and a half per cent., they at the same time imposed a new condition by the words, "privilege of canceling if sold." But Mr. Storey testifies, and this is not denied by the answer, or by any witness, that when he made the application on Saturday, and before the president had named the premium which he was willing to take, the president said he supposed that they would have to cancel the policy, if the vessel should be sold within the time; and that he (Storey) assented thereto; and that at the interview on Monday, when this point was referred to, the president said the usage in Boston would settle it, and he would not put anything concerning it into the policy; and after some conversation concerning the usage, Mr. Storey agreed to take the policy without any mention of the privilege of cancellation. Under these circumstances, we do not perceive that the requirement of this privilege can be considered as at all varying, in the apprehension and meaning of the parties, the terms of the acceptance on Monday, from the terms of the proposal on Saturday. But whether, under all the circumstances, this should be deemed to have been a continuing offer, we do not think it necessary to determine; because, on Monday, either the president's offer of Saturday was accepted by Mr. Storey, and its acceptance made known to the president, or the proposal was renewed by Mr. Storey, and accepted by the president. The fact that others chose to abstain from business on that day did not prevent these parties from contracting, if they saw fit to do so; and when one of them either accepted a continuing offer, or renewed a proposal which was accepted by the other, they made a binding contract. Nor do we think [ \* 321 ] the allegation of the answer, that the president \*informed Mr. Storey that no business was done in the office that day, but the next day he would attend to it, can reasonably be

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interpreted to mean that he had not made, or intended to make, a contract for a policy. Their fair meaning is, that though he had agreed to make the insurance, as the secretary and clerks were not there, and the books not accessible, any action on the agreement must be deferred to the next day. The words cannot be understood to mean, that he would on the next day attend to what he had already done; and he had already made a contract for reinsurance, to be executed on the next day, by issuing a policy in due form to carry that agreement into effect.

On leaving the office of the defendants, Mr. Storey immediately informed the plaintiffs that he had effected this contract, and on the night of the same day the ship *Great Republic* was destroyed by fire, while lying at a wharf in the city of New York. On the twenty-seventh of December, the complainants tendered their note for the agreed premium, and demanded the policy of reinsurance. The defendants declined to make the policy. Several grounds have been insisted on in support of this refusal.

The first is, that by force of a statute of the State of Massachusetts, (Rev. Stats. ch. 37, secs. 12, 13,) insurance corporations can make valid policies of insurance only by having them signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary. But we are of opinion that this statute only directs the formal mode of signing policies, and has no application to agreements to make insurance.

Such we understand to be the view taken of this statute by the supreme court of Massachusetts. (*New England Ins. Co. v. De Wolf*, 8 Pick. 63; [Stat. 1817, ch. 120, sec. 1;] *McCulloch v. The Eagle Ins. Co.*, 1 Pick. 278; *Thayer v. The Med. Mu. Ins. Co.*, 10 Pick. 326. See also *Trustees v. Brooklyn Fire Ins. Co.*, 18 Barbour, 69; and *Carpenter v. The Mu. Safety Ins. Co.*, 4 Sand. Ch. R. 408.)

It is further insisted, that by the law merchant insurance can be effected only by a contract in writing. We do not doubt that the commercial law of all countries has treated of insurance as made in writing by an instrument, denominated by us a policy; and there may be provisions of positive law, in some countries, requiring an agreement to make a policy to be in writing. But there is no such statute of frauds in the State of Massachusetts.

The common law must therefore determine the question; and under that law, a promise for a valuable consideration to make a policy of insurance is no more required to be in writing \* than a promise to execute and deliver a bond, or a bill of [ \* 322 ] exchange, or a negotiable note. So it has been held by other courts, and, we think, on sound principles. (18 Barbour,



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69; *Hamilton v. The Lycoming Company*, 5 Barr. 339. See also *Sanford v. The Trust Fire Ins. Co.*, 11 Paige, 547.)

The respondents' counsel has argued that their president had not authority to enter into an oral contract binding the company to make insurance. They admit it has been usual for the president to make such contracts; but they say that when he has done so, the policy was not issued until the next day, and no risk is understood to have commenced under such an undertaking until the policy issues. Whether a risk be commenced when the contract for insurance is made, or only when the policy issues, must depend on the terms of the contract. Where, as in the present case, there is an express contract to take the risk from a past day, there is no room for any understanding that it is not to commence until a future day. Such an understanding would be directly repugnant to the express terms of the contract. And if the defendants have held out their president as authorized to make oral contracts for insurance, no secret limitation of this authority would affect third persons, dealing with him in good faith and without notice of such limitation. Besides, the supposed limitation would be inconsistent with the authority itself. It is, in effect, that though the president is authorized to make oral promises to effect insurance, the company are at liberty to execute those promises, or to refuse to do so, at their option.

The power of the president to enter into this contract to make insurance is nowhere denied in the answer. All that can bear on this subject occurs in certain statements concerning the usual course of business of the company. It seems to have been assumed by both parties, that whatever the president actually did in this transaction, he did for the company, and so as to render them responsible for his acts. And no question was raised on this point in the court below. Still it is incumbent on the complainants to offer competent and sufficient evidence of the authority of the president to bind the company, though less evidence may be reasonably sufficient when no issue concerning it is made on the record.

We think such evidence is in the case. Mr. Storey deposes, that during the three years next preceding this transaction, he had effected upwards of three hundred contracts for reinsurance, with the presidents of ten different insurance companies of Boston; and that one, or possibly two, of these presidents usually signed an accepted application—the others all contracted orally. [ \* 323 ] Considering that all the incorporated insurance companies of Boston have similar charters, and the same kind of officers to conduct their business, we think this is competent evi-

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dence, that presidents of such insurance companies in that city are generally held out to the public as having the authority to act in this manner. And upon a point not put in issue in the record, and on which no more than formal proof ought to be demanded, we hold this evidence sufficient. (*Fleckner v. The Bank of the United States*, 3 Wheat. 360; *Minor v. The Mechanics' Bank of Alexandria*, 1 Peters, 46.)

The fair inference is, that if the general authority of the president to contract for the corporation had been put in issue, it could have shown, by the most plenary proof, that the presidents of insurance companies in the city of Boston are generally held out to the public by those companies as their agents, empowered to receive and assent, either orally or in writing, to proposals for insurance, and to bind their principals by such assent.

Nor do we deem it essential to the existence of a binding contract to make insurance, that a premium note should have been actually signed and delivered. The promise of the plaintiffs to give a note for the premium was a sufficient consideration for the promise to make a policy. It is admitted, that the usage is to deliver the note when the policy is handed to the assured. If the defendants had tendered the policy, we have no doubt an action for not delivering the premium note would have at once lain against the plaintiffs; and we think there was a mutual right on their part, after a tender of the note, to maintain an action for non-delivery of the policy. In *Tayloe v. The Mutual Fire Ins. Co.* (9 How. 390) it was held that a bill in equity for the specific performance of a contract for a policy could be maintained. And it being admitted that in this case the defendants would be liable as for a total loss on the policy, if issued in conformity with the contract, no further question remained to be tried, and it was proper to decree the payment of the money, which would have been payable on the policy if it had been issued.

The decree of the circuit court is affirmed.

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EDWARD FIELD, Plaintiff in Error, v. PARDON G. SEABURY.  
(Two cases.)

19 H. 323.

PATENT FOR LAND NOT IMPEACHABLE AT LAW FOR FRAUD.

1. Where a patent or grant for land issues from the government, either by the legislative or executive branch, it can only be impeached for fraud at the suit of the government.

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2. Hence no such question can be raised in an action of ejectment.
3. Under the statutes of California of March 26, 1851, and March 26, 1852, the defendants bring themselves in this case within their requirements, and plaintiffs do not. The facts considered.

WRIT of error from the circuit court for the district of California.  
The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Lockwood*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Holladay*, for defendants.

[ \* 324 ] \* Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court.

This case has been brought to this court by writ of error from the circuit court of the United States for the district of California.

The circumstances disclosed by the record, and the documentary evidence introduced by the parties in support of their respective rights to the land in controversy, make an extended statement necessary, in order that the points decided may be understood.

The defendant in error brought into the circuit court an action of ejectment against Wyman and others, tenants of the plaintiff in error, to recover the possession of lot No. 464, it being a subdivision of a lot of one hundred varas square, numbered 456, of the San Francisco beach and water lots. Field, the plaintiff in error, was admitted to defend, and a verdict having been given for the plaintiffs below, it was agreed by a stipulation in the record that this writ of error should be prosecuted by Field alone, without joining the other defendants.

Both parties claimed title under an act of the legislature of California, passed the 26th March, 1851, entitled "An act to provide for the disposition of certain property of the State of California," the provisions of which, so far as they relate to this cause, are as follows:

[ \* 325 ] \* The first section of the act describes the land to be disposed of; and the second section is, that "the use and occupation of all the land described in the first section of the act is hereby granted to the city of San Francisco for the term of ninety-nine years from the date of this act, except as hereinafter provided; all the lands mentioned in the first section of this act, which have been sold by authority of the ayuntamiento, or town or city council, or by an alcalde of the said town or city, at public auction, in accordance with the terms of the grant known as Kearney's grant to the city of San Francisco, or which have been sold or granted by any alcalde of the said city of San Francisco, and

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confirmed by the ayuntamiento, or town or city council thereof; and also registered or recorded in some book of record now in the office or custody or control of the recorder of the county of San Francisco, on or before the third day of April, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and fifty, shall be and the same are hereby granted and confirmed to the purchaser or purchasers or grantees aforesaid, by the State relinquishing the use and occupation of the same and her interests therein to the said purchasers or grantees, and each of them, their heirs and assigns, or any person or persons holding under them, for the term of ninety-nine years from and after the passage of this act."

SEC. 3. "That the original deed, or other written or printed instrument of conveyance, by which any of the lands mentioned in the first section of this act were conveyed or granted by such common council, ayuntamiento, or alcalde, and in case of its loss, or not being within the control of the party, then a record copy thereof, or a record copy of a material portion thereof, properly authenticated, may be read in evidence in any court of justice in this State, upon the trial of any cause in which the contents may be important to be proved, and shall be *prima facie* evidence of title and possession, to enable the plaintiff to recover the possession of the land so granted."

Kearney's grant mentioned in the act was read in evidence at the trial by the plaintiffs in the action; it is dated March 10th, 1847, and is as follows:

"I, Brigadier General S. W. Kearney, governor of California, by virtue of authority in me vested by the president of the United States of America, do hereby grant, convey, and release, unto the town of San Francisco, the people or corporate authorities thereof, all the right, title, and interest thereof, of the government of the United States, and of the Territory of California, in and to the beach and water lots on the east front of said town of San Francisco, including between the points known as the Rincon and Fort Montgomery, excepting such lots as may be selected for the use of the general \* government by the senior officers [ \* 326 ] of the army and navy now there, provided the said ground hereby ceded shall be divided into lots, and sold by public auction to the highest bidders, after three months' notice previously given. The proceeds of said sale to be for the benefit of the town of San Francisco."

It was agreed by the parties at the trial that the lot sued for is included in the first section of the act of March 26, 1851, already cited, and also within the locality of the Kearney grant; that it is no part of any government reservation; and that on the 9th of

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September, 1850, when California was admitted as a State into the Union, the lot was below high-water mark.

In order to show themselves entitled to the lot in question under the second section of the act cited, the plaintiffs below produced the following documents:

1. A grant by John W. Geary, first alcalde of San Francisco, to Thomas Sprague, dated January 3d, 1850, reciting the Kearney grant, calling it a "decree," and that by virtue thereof, and by direction of the ayuntamiento, a certain portion of said ground, duly divided into lots as aforesaid, after notice, as required by the "decree" or grant, had been exposed to sale at public auction, in conformity with it, on the 3d day of January, 1850; and that one of the lots, numbered on the map 464, had been sold to Thomas Sprague for \$1,700, for which he had paid in cash \$425, and had obliged himself to pay the sum of \$1,275 in three equal installments, on the 3d of April, 3d of July, and the 3d of October; that Sprague then received a grant for the lot to him, his heirs and assigns, forever, of all the estate that the town of San Francisco had in the same, as fully as the same was held and possessed by it, subject to a proviso that the grant was to be void for failure to pay the installments.

The foregoing document or grant was not recorded or registered, nor was any evidence given that three months' notice of the sale had been given, other than the recitals in the grant.

2. The plaintiff introduced a deed from Sprague to Seabury, Gifford, and one Horace Gushee, dated May 17, 1850, conveying to them in fee all his right and title to the lot sued for, and also another lot, No. 450, for the sum of \$4,000, with a provision that they should pay \$1,560 of the installments payable to the town.

The plaintiffs then introduced a deed from Horace Gushee to the plaintiff Parker, conveying to Parker in fee all his right and title to the water lot No. 464, for the consideration of \$100, which was dated April 20th, 1855.

Receipts by the city officers for three of the installments [ \* 327 ] of \* the purchase money, dated the 3d April, 3d July, and 3d October, were endorsed upon the grant.

The plaintiffs then rested their case upon the foregoing evidence.

Two grounds of defense were relied upon by the defendants: First, that the Geary grant was not within the act of March 26, 1851, for want of the notice of sale required by the Kearney grant; and also that it had never been registered and recorded, as the act required, in some book of record now in the office now in the cus-

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tody or control of the recorder of the county of San Francisco, on or before the third day of April, one thousand eight hundred and fifty. Second, that the defendants and those under whom they claimed had a good title to the premises under the provisions of the act of March 26, 1851. They also relied upon a possession of the premises for more than five years prior to the institution of the suit. To prove their title, the defendants gave in evidence the following document:

1st. A grant of the lot one hundred varas square, (of which the lot in question was a subdivision,) dated September 25th, 1848, by Leavenworth, alcalde of San Francisco, to Parker, upon the petition of the latter, both written on the same sheet, as follows:

*“To T. M. Leavenworth, alcalde and chief magistrate, district San Francisco:*

*“Your petitioner, the undersigned, a citizen of California, respectfully prays the grant of a title to a certain lot of land in the vicinity of the town of San Francisco, containing one hundred varas square, and bounded on the north by Washington street, on the west by a street dividing said lot from the beach and water survey, on the south by Clay street, and on the east by unsurveyed land, and numbered on the plan marked on page one (1) of district records as four hundred and fifty-six, (456.)* WILLIAM C. PARKER.”

On the same day the grant was made, as follows:

*“TERRITORY OF CALIFORNIA,*

*“District of San Francisco, Sept. 25, A. D. 1848.*

*“Know all men by these presents, that William C. Parker has presented the foregoing petition for a grant of land in the vicinity of the town of San Francisco, as therein described; therefore I, the undersigned, alcalde and magistrate of the district of San Francisco, in Upper California, do hereby give, and grant, and convey, unto the said William C. Parker, his \*heirs, and [ \* 328 ] assigns, forever, the lot of ground as set forth in the petition, by a good and sufficient title, in consonance with the established customs and regulations, being one hundred varas square, lying and being situated in the eastern vicinity of San Francisco, and outside the limits of the water lot survey.*

*“In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, as alcalde and chief magistrate of the district aforesaid.*

*“Done at San Francisco, the day and year above written.*

*“T. M. LEAVENWORTH.*



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“Recorded in the alcalde’s office, in book F of land titles, on page number 18, at 10½ o’clock a. m., November 28, 1849.

“*Office First Alcalde.*

A. BOWMAN, *Reg. Cl’k.*”

Then the defendants called Parker as a witness, to prove the execution of the grant in the manner and at the time as has been just stated, producing at the same time a deed from Parker to Leavenworth, dated the 26th September, 1848, and Parker certified it had been executed by him.

It was also proved that Leavenworth conveyed the premises to George W. Wright, by deed dated the 1st December, 1849. Wright conveyed one undivided half of the lot in fee to Charles T. Botts, and the other undivided half of the same to Edward Field, the now plaintiff in error, except two lots or subdivisions of the same, numbered 467 and 468. A deed from Botts, dated 1st October, 1852, to Joseph C. Palmer and Wright, conveying to them in fee the one undivided half of said lot, except the subdivisions of it 467 and 468, for the consideration of \$40,000, reciting the premises conveyed to be ten water lots, and that Botts derived title through the deed from Wright to him; and Palmer then conveyed the last-mentioned premises as they held them to Field, the plaintiff in error, for \$75,000, without any recital of the preceding conveyances, and the same was recorded on the 12th January, 1853, the day of the execution of the deed. It is as well to remark, that all of the deeds just mentioned were in the county recorder’s office. It was also agreed by the parties, in writing, that the original defendants in the action were in possession of the premises under leases from Field, the plaintiff in error, the production of the leases being dispensed with.

The defendants also gave in evidence book B of the district records, page 1, kept in the alcalde’s office, and as such turned over to the recorder of the county of San Francisco, upon the organization of that office in May, 1850, to prove from it that there had been a certificate of the Leavenworth conveyance of the land to [ \* 329 ] Parker, contemporary with the execution of it. \* The authenticity of the book B was proved by the testimony of witnesses who had been connected with the office of the alcalde, and afterwards with the office of the recorder of the county. Other testimony was also introduced by the defendants, of another book, F, kept by Alcalde Geary, the predecessor of Leavenworth, in which grants issued by his predecessor were recorded at length, which was turned over to the county recorder at the same time with book B, in which there was a literal transcript of Parker’s

original petition and Leavenworth's grant, as they have been already recited.

The defendants also gave in evidence a resolution of the ayuntamiento or town council of San Francisco, of the 11th October, 1848, confirming grants of Leavenworth to several parcels of land adjacent to the town, on the ground that Leavenworth had made them for the purpose of raising funds to defray the necessary expenses of the town and district. A deed from the board of California land commissioners, acting under the act of May 18, 1853, by which they were authorized to sell the interest of the State in the San Francisco beach and water lot property, was also put in evidence by the defendants, which conveyed in fee to Joseph Palmer and Edward C. Jones all the right, title, and interest, of the State of California in the aforesaid ten water lots, for the consideration of \$1,425. It was also proved that Palmer, Cook & Co., of which Palmer, Wright, and Jones, were members, commenced improving the lot in May, 1850, more than five years before the commencement of the suit, which was on the 7th June, 1855, and that they shortly afterwards leased it to one Gordon, who erected on it valuable improvements; and that they, and others claiming under them, had ever since occupied the premises.

A resolution of the town council, passed on the 5th October, 1849, requesting the alcalde to advertise the sale at the earliest moment, was also put in proof by the defendants, to show that the Geary grant of January 7, 1850, had been made without three months' notice of the sale having been given. Then, at this stage of the trial, the plaintiffs were permitted to discredit the fact that Leavenworth's grant to Parker had been recorded, as has been stated, by showing that there had been mistakes in recording grants in the book of records, and that there were several entries in the book purporting to be copies of grants by Leavenworth in 1849, after he went out of office, which the court permitted to be done—the defendants objecting—on the ground that, by reading from the book the grant to Parker, the defendants had made the entire book evidence; *and that the plaintiffs might read other entries in it, without any proof that the grants had been issued, or in fact dated, in the year 1849.* The \* court also permitted [ \* 330 ] Parker, the original grantee of Leavenworth, to be examined as a witness; and also Clark, a member of the town council, to prove that there had been fraud in the issue and confirmation of the Leavenworth grant. And upon the defendants objecting to the admissibility of such evidence, the court overruled their objection, saying "that the act of March 26, 1851, under which the

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plaintiffs and defendants claimed to have a title to the premises in dispute, was intended to confirm only honest titles, and that the plaintiff might impeach the Leavenworth grant to Parker, and the confirmation of it by the town council, by showing fraud." And under this ruling of the court, the plaintiffs were permitted to read as evidence from the books of records B and F, and from other books purporting to be minutes of grants made by Leavenworth to one Clark, to Jones and Buchelin, prior to October 11, 1848, intending to show by them that the members of the council who voted for the resolution of that date held divers grants which were confirmed by it, and had therefore acted fraudulently. And that was done without any proof of identity between the supposed grantees and other members of council, and without producing any originals of the supposed grants, or proving that any such grants were made. The witnesses, however, introduced to prove fraud in the issue of the Leavenworth grant, denied positively that it existed.

We do not think a more extended statement from the record necessary for the conclusion at which we have arrived in this case. That which has been given is sufficient for the construction of the act of March 26, 1851, under which both parties claim the premises in dispute, and for the decision of the exception taken by the defendants to the ruling of the court in respect to the admissibility of witnesses to prove that Leavenworth had practiced a fraud in issuing a grant to Parker for the lot 456.

It is admitted, that neither the plaintiff nor defendant could claim a title to any part of that lot under these alcalde grants, unless they can be brought within the act of March 26, 1851. (Laws of California, 764.) The court below said, in its charge to the jury, that neither of the alcaldes had any power to grant land, and that no estate passed by either of their grants. These documents are only to be considered as earmarks to designate the legislative grantees, who were intended to take under the act of March 26, 1851. Both parties in the suit bringing themselves within the classes designated, *the defendants, being in possession, as has been ascertained by the evidence, would on principles of law be entitled to a verdict.* In this the court was correct; and its first

[ \* 331 ] obligation, when the case was \* submitted to the jury, was to determine, by its construction of the act, whether both parties or either of them had, by their documentary evidence, been brought within the classes of grantees designated by the act. This, however, it did not do; but leaving that question undecided, after permitting the plaintiffs to introduce witnesses to prove that

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the Leavenworth grant had been fraudulently issued by him, it submitted the case to the jury, making it not only competent to find the fact of fraud, but constituting the jurors judges of the legal question, whether the plaintiff who had alleged the fraud was within the classes of grantees which the legislature meant to confirm, and that the defendant's alcalde grant was not comprehended by the legislative act—thus giving to a party who might not be able to claim a title under the act a chance, by the verdict of a jury, to dispossess another, also without a title under it, who had just been said by the court, in a controversy between them for the land, would be entitled to a verdict in virtue of his being in possession of it. If the plaintiff had no title under the act, though the defendant also was without one, the former could have no complaint against him, nor any legal right to recover in ejectment land of which the defendant was in possession. The court, in this part of its ruling, made the charge of fraud the turning point in the case, and not the right of title to the premises, by the construction of the act under which both parties claimed a title, and by which it had said either could only claim. The result was, the jury, having been so instructed, found a verdict for the plaintiff upon the question of fraud, without any instruction in any part of its charge that he claimed a title from an alcalde's grant, which was within the act of March 26, 1851, or that the defendant was without one, unless it be the court's intimation to the jury that the defendant might be considered as having no title under the act, if they should find that there had been fraud in the issue of his alcalde grant, or in the confirmation of it. The court's construction of the rights of the parties under the act should have been independent of the question of fraud. The evidence which it allowed to be given of it was inadmissible, and the finding of the jury is of no weight in the case. Fraud, as it is sometimes said, "vitiates every act"—correctly, too, when properly applied to the subject-matter in controversy, and to the parties in it, and in a proper forum. For instance, as when one of them charges the other with an actual fraud; or when one of them, by his omission to do an act in time, which he ought to have done, as in not having recorded a deed, the other, without any knowledge of its existence, becomes in good faith a purchaser of the same property; in such a case a claim, \* under the unregistered deed, is said to be [ \* 332 ] fraudulent and void against a subsequent *bona fide* purchaser without notice. But in that case, the latter gains a legal preference by the court's construction of the registry act, under which the first deed ought to have been recorded, and, as a matter

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of law, so instructs the jury. But these cases are not applicable to the case in hand. Those are cases where the actual or constructive fraud grows out of the conduct of parties directly to each other, or is consequential from such conduct.

This case involves directly the point *whether*, when a grant or patent for land, or legislative confirmation of titles to land, has been given by the sovereignty or legislative authority only having the right to make it, without any provision having been made in the patent or by the law to inquire into its fairness as between the grantor and grantee, or between third parties, a third party cannot raise in ejectment the question of fraud as between the grantor and grantee, and thus look beyond the patent or grant.

We are not aware that such a proceeding is permitted in any of the courts of law. In England, a bill in equity lies to set aside letters patent obtained from the king by fraud, (*Att. Gen. v. Vernon*, 277, 370; the same case, 2 Ch. Rep. 353,) and it would in the United States; but it is a question exclusively between the sovereignty making the grant and the grantee. But in neither could a patent be collaterally avoided at law for fraud. This court has never declared it could be done. *Stoddard v. Chambers* (2 How. 284) does not do so, as has been supposed. In that case, an act of congress confirming titles, *excepted* cases where the land had previously been located by any other person than the confirmer, under any law of the United States, or had been surveyed and sold by the United States; and this court held that a location made on land reserved from sale by an act of congress, or a patent obtained for land so reserved, was not within the exception, and the title of the confirmer was made perfect by the act of confirmation, and without any patent, as against the prior patent, which was simply void; and this valid legal title enured at once to the benefit of an assignee of the confirmer. In this connection it must be remembered that we are speaking of patents for land, and not of transactions between individuals, in which it has been incidentally said, by this court, that deeds fraudulently obtained may be collaterally avoided at law. (*Gregg v. Sayre*, 8 Peters, 244; *Swayzer v. Burke*, 12 Peters, 11.)

But we are also of the opinion that the act of March 26, 1851, to provide for the disposition of certain property of the [ \* 333 ] \* State of California, (Cal. Laws, 764,) makes a direct grant of all lands of the kind, and within the limits mentioned in the act, which had been sold or granted by any alcalde of the city of San Francisco, and confirmed by the ayuntamiento, or town or city council thereof, and also *registered or recorded in some book of record which was at the date of the act in the office or custody or*

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*control of the recorder of the county of San Francisco, on or before the third day of April, one thousand eight hundred and fifty.* The words of the statute are, "that all the lands mentioned in the first section of it are hereby granted and confirmed to the purchaser or purchasers, or grantees aforesaid, by the State relinquishing the use and occupation of the same, and her interests therein, to the said purchasers or grantees, and each of them, their heirs and assigns, or any person or persons holding under them, for the term of ninety-nine years from and after the passage of the act." This language cannot be misinterpreted. The intention of the legislature is without doubt, and we cannot make it otherwise by supposing any condition than those expressed in the act; and we also think that the registry of an alcalde's grant, in the manner and within the time mentioned in the act, is essential to its confirmation under the act. In this particular, the Kearney grant, under which the plaintiff claimed, was deficient, and so the court should have instructed the jury upon the prayer of the defendant, without the qualification that the entry made of it in the district records was a registry within the meaning of the act. We do not deem it necessary to say more in this case, than that, in our view, the defendants have brought themselves, by their documentary evidence, completely within the confirming act of the 26th March, 1850, and that the court should have so instructed the jury, as it was asked to do by their counsel.

The judgment of the court below is reversed.

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**W. F. BRYAN AND RUDOLPHUS ROUSE, Plaintiffs in Error, v. ROBERT FORSYTH.**

19 H. 334.

**PEORIA SETTLEMENT RIGHTS—STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS—AMERICAN STATE PAPERS AS EVIDENCE.**

1. Where, under the acts of 1820 and 1823, concerning settlement rights to Peoria town lots, a claim had been reported favorably, and, under the act of 1823, a survey was made in 1840, and a patent issued in 1845, the title of this patent relates back to 1823.
2. It is, with the survey and other documents, superior to a patent on an ordinary entry issued in 1838, which contained a reservation of the rights of all persons claiming under the act of 1823.
3. But such junior patent is sufficient color of title for the seven years' statute of limitations of Illinois; and the time under that statute begins to run from the date of the survey in 1840, because from that date the other party had a title on which ejectment could have been maintained.



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4. The report of Edward Coles, register of the land office at Edwardsville, found in the American State Papers, can be read in evidence from those papers, which are public documents, the authority of which is not open to controversy.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the northern district of Illinois.

The facts are stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Ballance and Mr. Johnson*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Williams*, for defendant.

Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court.

Forsyth sued Bryan and Rouse in ejectment for part of lot No. 7, in the town of Peoria, in the State of Illinois. The action was founded on a patent to Forsyth, from the United States, dated the 16th day of December, 1845, which patent was given in evidence on the trial in the circuit court. It was admitted that the defendants were in possession when they were sued, and that they held possession within the bounds of the patent. To overcome this *prima facie* title, the defendants gave in evidence a patent from the United States to John L. Bogardus, containing twenty-three acres, dated January 5th, 1838, which included lot No. 7. To

overreach this elder patent, the plaintiff relied on an act [ \* 335 ] of congress, passed May 15, \* 1820, for the relief of the inhabitants of the village of Peoria, providing that every person who claims a lot in said village shall, on or before the first day of October next, deliver to the register of the land office for the district of Edwardsville a notice in writing of his or her claim; and it was made the duty of the register to make a report to the secretary of the treasury of all claims filed, with the substance of the evidence in support thereof, and also his opinion, and such remarks respecting the claims as he might think proper to make; which report, together with a list of the claims which, in the opinion of the register, ought to be confirmed, shall be laid by the secretary before congress, for their determination.

The report was made, and laid before congress, in January, 1821. As respected lot No. 7, (a part of which is in dispute,) the register reported that Thomas Forsyth claimed it; that it was three hundred feet square, French measure, situate in the village of Peoria, and bounded eastwardly by a street, separating it from the Illinois river; northwardly by a cross street, westwardly by a back street, and southwardly by a lot claimed by Jacques Mette. The remark of the register is: "A part of this lot must have been embraced by the lot claimed by Augustine Rogue." Rogue's claim (No. 2) was

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for a lot of about an arpent, and bounded, says the register, northwardly by a lot occupied by Maillette, eastwardly by a road separating it from Illinois river, and southwardly and westwardly by the prairie.

The register reported on seventy lots in all. A survey to designate boundaries among the claimants was indispensable, as they were in considerable confusion. Congress again legislated on the subject, by act of March 3, 1823, and provided that each of the settlers, whose names were contained in the report, who had settled a village lot prior to the first of January, 1813, should be entitled thereto; the lot so settled on and improved, not to exceed two acres; and where it exceeded two acres, such claimant should be confirmed in a quantity not exceeding ten acres. It was made the duty of the surveyor of public lands for the district, to cause a survey to be made of the several lots, and to designate on a plat thereof the lot confirmed and set apart to *each* claimant, and forward the same to the secretary of the treasury, who shall (says the act) cause patents to be issued in favor of each claimant, as in other cases.

The survey was made in 1840, by order of the surveyor general of Illinois and Missouri, which was duly returned, approved, and recorded. We are of opinion that the act of 1823 conferred on the grantee an incipient title, and reserved to the \*ex- [\* 336] ecutive department administering the public lands the authority to settle the boundaries by actual survey among the claimants; and until this was done, the courts of justice could not interfere and establish boundaries. It was competent for congress to provide, that before a title should be given to a confirmee, the exact limits of his confirmation should be ascertained by a survey executed by authority of the United States. (*West v. Cochran*, 17 How. 415.)

When the surveys were made, and the plats returned and approved, and recorded by the surveyor general of Illinois and Missouri, and recognized as valid at the general land office, (as the patent to Forsyth shows it was,) it bound the parties to it, the confirmee and the United States; nor can either side be heard to deny that the land granted by the act of 1823 is the precise lot Forsyth was entitled to; such being the settled doctrine of this court. (*Menard's Heirs v. Massey*, 8 How. 313.) Neither can Bogardus or his assignee deny that he was concluded by the survey. His patent grants the land to him in fee, "subject, however, to all the rights of any and all persons claiming under the act of congress of 3d March, 1823, entitled 'An act to confirm certain claims to lots in the village of Peoria, in the State of Illinois.'" This patent is the

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only title set up by the defendants below; by its terms, all power to perfect the title of Forsyth, according to the act of 1823, was reserved to and retained by the department of public lands, as effectually after the Bogardus patent was issued as before.

The survey having bound the United States, and concluded Bogardus, Forsyth had a title by virtue of the acts of 1820 and 1823, and the survey, which was of a legal character; and he could maintain an action of ejectment on it, even had no patent issued. This is true beyond controversy, if the action had been prosecuted in a State court, where the State laws authorized suits in ejectment on imperfect titles. (Ross v. Borland, 1 Pet. 655; Chouteau v. Eckhard, 2 How. 372.)

But it is insisted that in the courts of the United States a different rule applies, and that, as a patent carries the fee, it is the better title. The case of Robinson v. Campbell, (3 Wheat. 212,) is supposed to be to this effect. There, the conflicting patents were made by the commonwealth of Virginia, and the defendant attempted to prove that a settlement had been made on the land in dispute by one Fitzgerald, and which preference right had been assigned to Martin, who obtained a certificate from the commissioners for adjusting titles to unpatented lands; which certificate was of anterior date to the junior patent, and was the source of title. It was nothing more than evidence that Martin had a preference to [ \* 337 ] purchase the land, if he saw proper to do so; and was not competent evidence in an action of ejectment, according to the laws of Virginia, or even of Tennessee. It was not an entry founded on consideration, but a right of abating an equity at the discretion of the settler. Neither in Virginia nor Kentucky (where the Virginia land laws prevail) is the defendant allowed to go behind the patent in a court of law, in order to give the patent a date from that of the entry on which the patent was founded.

The question here is, on the effects of acts of congress confirming claims to lands as valid, by which legislation the government is concluded; and as respects these, it is settled, that after a survey is duly made, approved, and recorded at the surveyor general's office, an action of ejectment may be maintained on such titles in the courts of the United States. It is a good *prima facie* title. (Stoddard v. Chambers, 2 How. 313; Le Bois v. Brammell, 4 How. 456; Bissell v. Penrose, 8 How. 317.) In Stoddard v. Chambers, this court held "that a confirmation by act of congress vests in the confirmer the right of the United States, and a patent, if issued, could only be evidence of this." Other cases followed this decision. By the third section of the act of July 4, 1836, it is provided that

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a patent shall issue to the confirmer in cases confirmed by that act. In this respect, the provisions of the acts of 1823 and 1836 are alike.

Of course the patent in this instance can relate to a title which is valid against another title unaided by the younger patent.

This disposes of the exception taken by the defendants below to the ruling of the court, that Forsyth's title was superior to that of Bogardus.

They next ask the court to instruct the jury, that by the laws of Illinois they had such title as would bar an action of ejectment after seven years, accompanied by actual residence on the land sued for; and if the jury believe from the evidence that the defendants have so long had said possession, the plaintiff cannot succeed in this suit. There were two other instructions asked, requiring the court to instruct the jury that the plaintiff's action was barred by the act of limitations of twenty years.

The court refused to instruct as requested; "but, on the contrary, instructed the jury that the patent to Bogardus did not grant or convey the ground in controversy; and it being conceded that it was the only title the defendant had, there is no such title as under the statute of limitations protects the possession of the defendants." This instruction was founded on an exception in the patent to Bogardus. It grants to him, \* and to his heirs and [ \* 338 ] assigns forever, "subject, however, to all the rights of any and all persons under the act of congress of March 3d, 1823, entitled 'An act to confirm certain claims to lots in the village of Peoria, in the State of Illinois.'"

When this patent was made, in 1838, the village lots had not been surveyed, and those that interfered with the land granted to Bogardus might never be claimed. Subject to this contingency he took his patent, and had a title in fee till 1840, when the village title of Forsyth was ripened into the better right. After that, those claiming under Bogardus held the position of one who claims protection by the act of limitations under a younger patent against an elder one. He has only the appearance of title. The patent to Bogardus was a fee simple title on its face, and is such title as will afford protection to those claiming under it, either directly, or, having a title connected with it, with possession for seven years, as required by the statute of Illinois. The court below erred in cutting off this defense.

In the progress of the trial in the circuit court, the plaintiff offered in evidence the printed report of Edward Coles, the register of the land office at Edwardsville, as found in the American

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State Papers, vol. 3, from pages 421 to 431, inclusive, to which the defendant objected, because it was not, without proof of its authenticity, legal evidence. But the court overruled the objection, and the report was given in evidence to the jury, to which ruling the defendants excepted.

These State Papers were published by order of congress, and selected and edited by the secretary of the senate and clerk of the house. They contain copies of legislative and executive documents, and are as valid evidence as the originals are from which they were copied; and it cannot be denied that a record of the report of Edward Coles, as found in the printed journals of congress, could be read on mere inspection as evidence that it was the report sent in by the secretary of the treasury. The competency of these documents as evidence in the investigation of claims to lands in the courts of justice has not been controverted for twenty years, and is not open to controversy.

It is ordered that the judgment be reversed, and the cause remanded for another trial.

Mr. Justice McLEAN dissenting.

Some time during the late war with England, a company of militia in the service of the United States, at Peoria, in Illinois, taking offense at the inhabitants of the village, burnt it.

Congress, with the view of ascertaining the extent of the injury and the names of the sufferers, on the 15th May, 1820, [ \* 339 ] \* passed an act, "that every person, or the legal representatives of every person, who claims a lot or lots in the village of Peoria, in the State of Illinois, shall, on or before the first day of October next, deliver to the register of the land office for the district of Edwardsville a notice in writing of his or her claim; and it shall be the duty of the said register to make to the secretary of the treasury a report of all claims filed with the said register, with the substance of the evidence thereof; and also his opinion, and such remarks respecting the claims as he may think proper to make; which report, together with a list of the claims which in the opinion of the said register ought to be confirmed, shall be laid by the secretary of the treasury before congress, for their determination."

The report was made, as required in the above act, by E. Coles, esq., register, on the 10th of November, 1820. By that report, No. 7, Thomas Forsyth claims "a lot of three hundred feet in front by three hundred feet in depth, French measure, in the village of Peoria, and bounded eastwardly by a street separating it from the

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Illinois river, northwardly by a cross street, westwardly by a back street, and southwardly by a lot claimed by Jacques Mette.”

On the 3d of March, 1823, Congress passed an act, which declares, “that there is hereby granted to each of the French and Canadian inhabitants, and other settlers, in the village of Peoria, in the State of Illinois, whose claims are contained in a report made by the register of the land office at Edwardsville, in pursuance of the act of Congress approved May the 15th, 1820, and who had settled a lot in the village aforesaid prior to the 1st day of January, 1813, and who had not heretofore received a confirmation of claims or donation of any tract of land or village lot from the United States, the lot so settled on and improved, where the same shall not exceed two acres.”

The second section made it the duty of the surveyor of the public lands of the United States, for that district, to cause a survey to be made of the several lots, and to designate on a plat thereof the lot confirmed and set apart to each claimant, and forward the same to the secretary of the treasury, who shall cause patents to be issued in favor of such claimants, as in other cases.

In the action of ejectment brought by Forsyth, as above stated, to recover possession of lot No. 7, described, it was agreed that upon the trial it shall be admitted that the plaintiff has the title of Thomas Forsyth in and to the land sued for, by descent, and purchase, and conveyance; and also that the defendants have had the actual possession of the land for which they are respectively sued, by residence thereon, for ten \*years next pre- [\* 340] ceding the commencement of the suit; and that John L. Bogardus, under whom they claim, had possession of the southeast fractional quarter of section nine, in township eight north, of range eight east, upon which the land sued for is situated, claiming the same under pre-emption right more than twenty years before the commencement of these suits, but he never had the actual possession of that part of said fractional quarter section sued for; and that said “defendants respectively had vested in them, before the commencement of this suit, all the right of Bogardus.”

A patent was issued to Bogardus for the southern fractional quarter of section nine, in township eight north, of range east, containing twenty-three acres and ninety-three hundredths of an acre, &c.; “subject, however, to all the rights of any and all persons claiming under the act of congress of 3d March, 1823, entitled ‘An act to confirm certain claims to lots in the village of Peoria, in the State of Illinois.’”

The defendants rely on the statute of limitations of 1827, which



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requires that the possession should be by actual residence on the land, under a connected title in law or equity, deducible of record from the United States.

The court instructed the jury that the title claimed under Bogardus did not protect them under the statute.

This is held by this court to be an error, for which the judgment is reversed.

The error of the court consists in giving a construction not only to a written instrument, but to a patent. That it is the province of the court to construe such a paper, will not be controverted. The patent conveyed to Bogardus the land described, "subject, however, to all the rights of any and all persons claiming under the act of congress of the 3d March, 1823, entitled 'An act to confirm certain claims to lots in the village of Peoria, in the State of Illinois.'"

The lot in controversy was claimed under the act of 1823, which declared, "that there is hereby granted to each of the French and Canadian inhabitants, and other settlers, in the village of Peoria, in the State of Illinois, whose claims are contained in a report made by the register of the land office at Edwardsville, in pursuance of the act of congress approved May 15th, 1820, and who had settled a lot in the village aforesaid prior to the 1st of January, 1813, and who have not heretofore received a confirmation of claims or donation of any tract of land or village lot of the United States, the lot so settled upon and improved, where the same shall not exceed two acres," &c.

The right made subject to the patent was a legal right; [ \* 341 ] it was a grant by congress, which this court has recognized as the highest grade of title. A patent is issued by a ministerial officer, who is subject to error, but the legislative action is not to be doubted.

The survey of the lot was not made until 1st September, 1840, and the patent was issued to Forsyth, December 16, 1845.

In the case of Ballance v. Forsyth, (13 Howard, 24,) this court say: "If the patent to Bogardus be of prior date, the reservation in the patent, and also in his entry, was sufficient notice that the title to those lots did not pass; and this exception is sufficiently shown by the acts of the government." And again: "The statute did not protect the possession of the defendant below. His patent excepted those lots; of course, he had no title under it for the lots excepted."

Until the case before us was reversed for error by the district judges who conformed to the above decision, I did not suppose that any one could doubt the correctness of the decision. Bogardus, in

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1838, took a grant from the United States, subject to Forsyth's right, thereby recognizing it, and consequently from that time he held it in subordination to Forsyth's title. If it be admitted that the fee did not pass to Forsyth until the patent issued in 1845, the patent had relation back to the act of 1823, and operated from that time. The report of the register defined the boundaries of the lot as specifically as the survey, by reason of which, the lot was as well known, it is presumed, to the public, before the survey as afterwards. This may not have been the case with all the lots.

Let any one read the patent to Bogardus, and ask himself the question, whether the United States intended to convey the lots to which the patent was made subject, and the answer must be, that they did not. By the act of 1823, they granted those lots to the French settlers, who, by the report of the register, were entitled to them under the act of 1820. It would have been an act of bad faith in the government, after the act of 1823, to convey any one of those lots; and, on reading the patent, it is clear they did not intend to convey any one of them. It is said, suppose the French settlers had not claimed the lots, would not Bogardus have had a right to them? Such a supposition cannot be raised against the facts proved. The title of Forsyth was of prior date, and of a higher nature, than that of Bogardus. His title was subordinate, as expressed upon its face.

In the case of *Hawkins v. Barney's Lessee*, (9 Curtis, 428,) the same question was before this court. Barney conveyed fifty thousand acres of land, in Kentucky, to Oliver; some time afterwards, Oliver reconveyed the same tract to Barney, in \* which deed were recited several conveyances of parcels [ \* 342 ] of the tract to several individuals, and particularly one of 11,000 acres, to one Berriman. Barney brought an ejectment against Hawkins, and proved that he had entered on the fifty thousand acre tract. This court held his action could not be sustained, unless he proved the defendant was not only in possession of the large tract, but he must show that the possession was not upon any one of the tracts sold and conveyed.

To apply the principle to the case before us. Had Bogardus brought an action of ejectment to sustain it, he must have proved the trespasser was within his patent, and outside of any one of the reserved lots. The words, "subject to all the rights of any persons under the act of 1823," showed that those rights were not granted by the patent; and if Bogardus himself could not have recovered, it is strange how the defendants could recover, who claim to be in possession under his patent.

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The agreed case admits that the "defendants respectively had vested in them, before the commencement of this suit, all the right of Bogardus." But whether this possession under the right of Bogardus was for a day or a year, is nowhere shown by the evidence; and unless I am mistaken, the statute requires a seven years' possession under title to protect the trespasser, and in effect give him the land.

Bogardus was in possession, claiming a pre-emption, but I do not understand, from the opinion of the court, that such a possession will run, even against the French claimants. Bogardus himself was a trespasser on the lands of the United States, and until he received his patent in 1838, I suppose he could not set up a claim to the land under title.

I hold, and can maintain, that the instruction of the district judge was right, in saying that the patent of Bogardus did not grant or convey the ground in controversy. And if it did, there was no such possession under it, which, by the statute of limitations, protected the right of the defendants.

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CHARLES BALLANCE, Plaintiff in Error, v. ADOLPH PAPIN and others.

19 H. 342.

PEORIA SETTLEMENT LOTS—INSUFFICIENCY OF THE MAP OF SURVEY PRODUCED.

The titles are the same in this as in the preceding case; but the map of the survey is wholly insufficient to make good the patent issued under the act of 1823.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the northern district of Illinois, and the matter on which it was decided is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Ballance*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Williams* and *Mr. Gamble*, for defendants.

[ \* 343 ] \* Mr. Justice CATRON delivered the opinion of the court.

In the case of Charles Ballance against Papin and Atchison, the same title was relied on by the defendant below (Ballance) that was set up in defense in the preceding case of Forsyth v. Bryan and Rouse. The plaintiff sued to recover a village lot in Peoria, No. 42, confirmed to Fontaine, in right of his wife, Josette Cassarau, dit Fontaine. A plat of lot No. 42 was given in evidence, and is found in the record, but no certificate of the surveyor

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accompanies this plat, and without such certificate there is no evidence that lot No. 42 was lawfully surveyed. The act of 1823 (sec. 2) required that a survey should be made of each lot confirmed to the claimant, and a plat thereof forwarded to the secretary. The evidence of a legal United States survey is not a mere plat, without any written description of the land by metes and bounds; neither the plat, nor less proof than a written description, will make a record on which a patent can issue. That most accurate evidence of separate surveys of the village lots of Peoria exists, we know; but as none is found in this record of lot No. 42, it follows, from the reasons given in the previous case, that no title was adduced in the circuit court that authorized it to reject the instructions demanded by the defendant; that, comparing the titles of the parties by their face, the defendant's was the better one. But as the same question of the application of the act of limitations arises in this case as it did in the former one, it must of course have been reversed, had the certificate of survey been found in the record. We therefore order that the judgment be reversed, and the cause remanded for another trial to be had therein.

Mr. Justice McLEAN dissented.

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THE UNITED STATES, Appellants, v. PERALTA.

19 H. 343.

CALIFORNIA LAND CLAIMS.

1. Where claimant produces record evidence of his title, and the only question is of the authority of the Mexican officers to make the grant, the *prima facie* presumption will be in favor of the power. The power of the Mexican territorial governors to grant land considered.
2. The record and the contemporary parol testimony in this case combine to show that appellee's claim of boundary is just.

APPEAL from the district court for the southern district of California.

The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Gillett*, for the United States.

*Mr. Rose* and *Mr. Bibb*, for appellee.

\* Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 345 ]

This case originated before the commissioners for ascertaining and settling private land claims in California.

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Domingo and Vicente Peralta claimed as grantees and devisees of their father, Luis Peralta.

The documentary evidence filed in support of the claim consists of a true copy from the archives in the office of the surveyor general of California, containing, so far as they are material in the present inquiry, the following averments:

1. The petition of Luis Peralta to the governor for a grant of land, extending from the creek of San Leandro to a small mountain adjoining the sea beach, at the distance of four or five leagues, for the purpose of establishing a rancho, dated June 20, 1820.

2. The decree of Governor Sola, therein directing Captain Luis Antonio Arguello to appoint an officer to place the petitioner in possession of the lands petitioned for, dated August 3, 1820.

3. The order of Captain Arguello, dated August 10, 1820, detailing Lieut. Don Ignacio Martinez for that purpose.

4. The relinquishment of father Narciso Duran, on behalf of the mission of San José, of any claim to the land, and reserving the privilege of cutting wood on the same, which, he says, should remain in common, dated August 16, 1820.

5. Under the same date, the return of Lieut. Martinez, upon the order to give the possession, describing the boundaries, &c.

6. The decree of the governor, directing a portion of the lands assigned to Luis Peralta, by the foregoing act of possession, to be withdrawn, upon the reclamation of the mission of San Francisco, who claimed that the said portion of the lands was then in the occupancy of the mission as a sheep ranch.

7. The consent of Father Juan Cabot and Paloz Ordez, ministers of the mission, that the boundaries of the land solicited by Luis Peralta should be established at the rivulet, at the distance of three and a half to four leagues from the rancho house of the mission.

8. The return of Maximo Martinez upon Governor Sola's second decree for the delivery of possession, filing the boundaries in accordance with the claim of the mission, at a rivulet which runs down from the mountains to the beach, where there is a grove of willows, and about a league and a half from the cerito (little mountain) of San Antonio, in the direction of San Leandro.

[ \* 346 ] \* 9. A document dated October, 1822, and signed Sola, setting out, that on that day was issued in favor of Sergeant Luis Peralta, by the governor of the province, the certifying document for the land which has been granted him, as appears by the writ of possession which was given him by the lieutenant of his company, Don Ignacio Martinez, in conformity with the orders of the government.

10. A letter from Luis Peralta, protesting against the claim of the mission, dated October 14th, 1820.

11. A representation from Captain Don Luis Arguello to the governor, dated June 23, 1821, advocating the rights of Sergeant Peralta, in opposition to those of the mission, to the land in controversy; and, lastly, the description of the land returned by Luis Peralta, in obedience to the government, of the 7th of October, 1827.

The claimants gave in evidence, also, the original grant from Governor Sola to Luis Peralta, dated 18th of August, 1822; the petition of Luis Peralta to Governor Arguello, praying the restitution of the lands which had been taken from him on the demand of the mission; and the decree of Arguello, making such restitution, and directing him to be again put in possession by the same officer who had executed the former act of possession. To this order, Maximo Martinez made a return, duly executed, certifying that the grantee had been newly put in possession of the place called "Cerito de St. Antonio, and the rivulet which crosses the place, to the coast, where is a rock looking to the north."

It was further shown, from the public records, that on the 9th of April, 1822, the civil and military authorities of California formally recognized and gave in their adhesion to the new government of Mexico, according to the plan of Iguala and treaty of Cordova. Also, that in 1844, Ignacio Peralta, one of the heirs of Luis Peralta, petitioned the government for a new title to the land claimed, in consequence of the original title papers having been lost or mislaid. The archives show, also, that on the 13th of February, 1844, an order was made by Micheltorena, that a title be issued. Of the same date, there is the usual formal document "declaring Don Luis Peralta owner in fee of said land, which is bounded as follows:

"On the southeast by the creek of San Leandro; on the northwest by the creek of *Los Ceritos de San Antonio*, (the small hills of San Antonio;) on the southwest by the sea; and on the northeast by the tops of hills range, without prohibiting the inhabitants of Contra Costa from cutting wood for their own use, they not to sell the same." This document contains an order that "this expediente be transmitted to the \*departmental [ \* 347 ] assembly for their approval," but nothing further appears to have been done, nor is the signature of Micheltorena attached to the record.

The authenticity of these documents is admitted. The objections urged against their sufficiency to establish the claim are: first, that the officers had no power to make grants of land; and, second,



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that the northern boundary of the land described does not extend beyond a certain creek or stream, known by the name of San Antonio. This would exclude about one-half of the claim.

We are of opinion that neither of these objections is supported by the evidence in the case.

We have frequently decided that "the public acts of public officers, purporting to be exercised in an official capacity, and by public authority, shall not be presumed to be usurped, but that a legitimate authority had been previously given or subsequently ratified." To adopt a contrary rule would lead to infinite confusion and uncertainty of titles. The presumption arising from the grant itself makes it *prima facie* evidence of the power of the officer making it, and throws the burden of proof on the party denying it. The general powers of the governors and other Spanish officers to grant lands within the colonies in full property, and without restriction as to quantity, and in reward for important services, were fully considered by this court in the case of *United States v. Clarke*, (8 Peters, 436.)

The appellants, on whom the burden of proof is cast, to show want of authority, have produced no evidence, either documentary or historical, that the Spanish officers who usually acted as governors of the distant provinces of California were restricted in their powers, and could not make grants of land. The necessity for the exercise of such a power by the governors, if the crown desired these distant provinces to be settled, is the greater, because of their distance from the source of power. By the royal order of August 22, 1776, the northern and northwestern provinces of Mexico were formed into a new and distinct organization, called the Internal Provinces of New Spain. This organization included California. It conferred ample powers, civil, military, and political, on the commandant general. The archives of the former government also show, that as early as 1786, the governors of California had authority from the commandant general to make grants, limiting the number of sitios which should be granted. In 1792, California was annexed to the viceroyalty of Mexico, and so continued till the Spanish authority ceased. An attempt to trace the obscure history of the [ \* 348 ] various decrees, orders, and regulations of \* the Spanish government on this subject, would be tedious and unprofitable. It is sufficient for the case, that the archives of the Mexican government show that such power has been exercised by the governors under Spain, and continued to be so exercised under Mexico; and that such grants, made by the Spanish officers, have been confirmed and held valid by the Mexican authorities. Sola

styles himself political and military governor of California. He continued to exercise the same powers after his adhesion to the Mexican government, under the provisions of the plan of Iguala, and the twelfth section of the treaty of Cordova. The grant in fee, given by Sola, was after the revolution.

The government of Mexico, since that time, has always respected and confirmed such concessions, when any equitable or inchoate right, followed by possession and cultivation, had been conferred by the governors under Spain. The case of Arguello (18 How. 540) was that of a permit by Governor Sola, afterwards confirmed by the Mexican government and by this court. The plaintiff in error has not been able to produce anything from historical documents or the archives of California, tending to show a want of power in the respective officers in this case. On the contrary, the presumption of law is confirmed by both. The order of Micheltoarena, in 1844, for the granting the new title to Peralta, is itself evidence of the usage and custom, and that the acts of Sola and Arguello were considered valid, and that the title, whether equitable or legal, conferred to them, should be respected and confirmed by the government.

As the validity of the petitioner's title has been assailed on the ground of want of authority alone, it is unnecessary to notice more particularly the various documents exhibited in support of it. The grant by Sola of a portion of the tract of which Peralta had been originally put in possession, is a complete grant in fee for that portion. The restoration by Arguello of the original boundaries, by decree and act of the public officer, may not have the character of a complete grant; but it is of little importance to the decision of the case, whether it conferred only an inchoate or equitable title, connected with an undisputed possession of thirty years, and confirmed again in 1844, by the order of the governor of California; its claim for protection under the treaty with Mexico cannot be doubted, notwithstanding its want of confirmation by the departmental assembly.

The only remaining question is the position of the northern boundary line.

Peralta's original petition, in June, 1820, described the land \*desired, as beginning at a creek called San Leandro, [ \* 349 ] "and from this to a white hill, adjoining the sea beach, in the same direction, and along the coast four or five leagues."

The return of Ignacio Martinez, the officer who executed the order for delivery of possession on the 16th of August, 1820, describes "the boundaries which separate the land of Peralta, to be

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McCullough v. Roots.

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marked out as follows: The deep creek called San Leandro, and at a distance from this, (say five leagues,) there are two small mountains, (cerritos;) the first is close to the beach; next to it follows the San Antonio, serving as boundaries, the rivulet which issues from the mountain range, and runs along the foot of said cerrito of San Antonio, and at the entrance of a little gulch there is a rock elevating itself in the form of a monument, and looking towards the north." This is the description of the northern boundary. It refers to stable monuments—two hills, a rivulet passing at their foot, and a monumental rock. In other documents, Peralta speaks of this line "as the dividing boundary with my neighbor, Francisco Castro." Again, in the return of Ignacio Martinez to the order of the governor, Arguello, in 1823, to redeliver the possession to Peralta, up to his original boundary, he describes this within boundary by the same monument, "the cerrito San Antonio, the arroyito or rivulet which crosses the place to the coast, where is a rock looking to the north."

Lastly, the title of confirmation by Micheltorena in 1844, as quoted above, though not in the very words of the above documents, clearly describes the same monuments. These hills, rivulet, and rock, are well-known monuments, and their position is satisfactorily proved.

The testimony of the opinions of witnesses who have but lately arrived in the country, who are ignorant of the language and traditions of the neighborhood, and who are all interested in defeating the claim of the petitioners, can have little weight against the knowledge of others, who were present when the lines were established, some thirty years ago, and have known these boundaries till the present time.

The decree of the circuit court is therefore affirmed.

Mr. Justice DANIEL dissented.

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McCULLOUGH and CULBERTSON, Plaintiffs in Error, v. GUERNSEY Y.  
ROOTS and ERASTUS P. COE.

19 H. 349.

WAREHOUSE RECEIPTS—BROKER AND PRINCIPAL.

1. Agents who are brokers, making a contract in their own names for their principals, in which they have an interest, may sustain an action in their own name.
2. Purchasers from such agents cannot refuse to pay, on the ground that there is a warehouse receipt for the property outstanding in possession of a third person
3. Special circumstances of this case considered.

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McCullough v. Roots.

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THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Maryland. Its decision depended largely on special circumstances stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Schley*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Dobbin* and *Mr. Johnson*, for defendants.

\* Mr. Justice CAMPBELL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 350 ]

The plaintiffs below (Roots & Coe) sued the defendants (McCullough *et al.*) in general *indebitatus assumpsit*, in the circuit court, for the price of a quantity of hams in tierces which they claim to have sold and delivered to them. The plaintiffs are merchants in Cincinnati, Ohio, who, on their own account, and as agents for Adams & Buckingham, of New York, in November, 1853, contracted with Henry Lewis, of the same city, to make advances upon his consignments of bacon, pork, and similar articles of provisions, which these consignees were to dispose of, and, after reimbursing the advances and expenses, were to appropriate the net profits in part to the payment of a pre-existing debt due to those firms. The course of business was, to suffer Henry Lewis to prepare the articles for the market, and to superintend the sales, under a condition of accounting for their proceeds to the consignees. The advances were usually made upon the warehouse receipts of a firm of which Lewis was a partner, generally before the property \*specified in them was in the warehouse. The re- [ \* 351 ] cepts expressed articles which the warehouseman expected either to prepare or to procure otherwise, and the money advanced was generally intended to aid that object. To secure themselves from the contingency of any failure in these anticipations, the plaintiffs (Roots & Coe) sometimes exacted the guaranty of Samuel Lewis, a brother of Henry Lewis. This generally took the form of a warehouse receipt made by him, corresponding to the others. The articles designated in the receipts of Samuel Lewis, it was understood, would be supplied by Henry—Samuel being unconnected with any business of this description on his own account.

In April, 1854, Roots & Coe were the holders of a number of receipts of Samuel Lewis for provisions, which Henry Lewis was unable to supply. The plaintiffs (Roots & Coe) agreed, that if Samuel Lewis would secure the consignment of a quantity of hams, by executing a new receipt therefor, they would extend their advances to Henry Lewis until he could make the best disposition of them. This was assented to, and the contract hereafter mentioned was made.

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Samuel Lewis had not interfered with the business of Henry; nor did he control the property which his receipts from time to time specified. The property was left in the charge of Henry Lewis, to be appropriated according to his contract with the plaintiffs, (Roots & Coe,) of which the receipt was treated as a guaranty. The receipts executed at this settlement bear date the 4th of April, 1854, and are as follows:

“Received in store of Henry Lewis, and subject to the order of Roots & Coe, but not accountable for damages by fire, four hundred and fifteen hogsheads sugar-cured hams in pickle, containing nine hundred pounds net weight; said hams to be smoked and canvassed within thirty days, and delivered to said Roots & Coe, or their order, said Roots & Coe being responsible for the smoking and canvassing the same; and it is further agreed between the parties, that when the above hams are delivered to said Roots & Coe, then and in that case my former warehouse receipts for two thousand five hundred barrels of mess pork, four hundred barrels of lard, and one hundred thousand pounds of shoulders from the block, shall be given up and canceled; but I am not responsible for smoking or canvassing the same, that being a matter between said Henry Lewis and Roots & Coe.

(Signed)

SAMUEL LEWIS.”

At the same time, Henry Lewis gave the following receipt:

“Whereas Roots & Coe hold Samuel Lewis’s warehouse  
[ \* 352 ] \* receipt of this date for four hundred and fifteen hogsheads sugar-cured hams in pickle, each hogshead containing nine hundred pounds net weight, to be delivered within thirty days: Now, I do hereby agree to smoke, canvass, yellow-wash, and pack the same, free of charge to Roots & Coe; and also agree not to require Roots & Coe to refund to me the freight on the same from Indianapolis to this place, being one hundred and fifty cents per hogshead, which I have paid, in consideration of having received an advance on the above-mentioned hams from Adams & Buckingham, through said Roots & Coe. But in case I should purchase and pay for the same within thirty days from this date, then Roots & Coe agree to refund the freight from Indianapolis to this point, being one dollar and fifty cents per hogshead.

“HENRY LEWIS.”

At the time this contract was made, the property specified in it was not in store at Cincinnati, but a portion was delivered to the plaintiffs (Roots & Coe) the day after its date. The remainder came consigned to their order during that and the following month,

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and was deposited in the warehouse of Henry Lewis, under their directions; and Henry Lewis was employed to canvass, yellow-wash, brand, and pack in tierces the hams, ready for the market; for this, Roots & Coe were to pay Lewis his bill of charges as a further advance. While the property was in this condition, a disagreement arose between Henry Lewis and Roots & Coe, relative to a deficiency in the weight of the hogsheads, and whether the warehouse receipt of Samuel Lewis amounted to a warranty of the weights.

In May and June, 1854, the defendants below purchased two hundred and twelve tierces of these hams, at a specific price. Roots & Coe and Henry Lewis respectively claim to have made this sale, and both were present when it was made.

The money arising from the sale was designed for the former, and the sale was entered on their books, and there is strong evidence to the fact that the defendants promised to pay their bill for the hams in June, 1854. But before the payment, Henry Lewis insisted upon a surrender of the warehouse receipts of Samuel Lewis; and that being refused, he directed the defendants to appropriate the price as a credit on the joint debt of Samuel Lewis and himself to them; and this was done by them accordingly.

Upon the trial in the circuit court, the plaintiffs in error moved for fourteen distinct instructions to the jury, which the court declined to give, but gave in their stead the following charge:

“1. If the jury shall find, from the evidence in this case, \* that the said two hundred and twelve tierces were [ \* 353 ] part of the hams contained in the four hundred and fifteen hogsheads mentioned in the receipt of April 4, 1854; that they were sold by the said plaintiffs, in their own name, to the said defendants; that at the time of the said sale the said hams belonged to the said plaintiffs, or that they had an interest in the same for advances or commissions, and authority as the agents of Adams & Buckingham to dispose of the same; and that said hams were delivered to, and received by, said defendants, in pursuance of said sale, then the plaintiffs are entitled to recover the full amount or price of the said hams.

“2. That although the jury may find from the evidence that the the said hams were sold to defendants by Henry Lewis, yet if they also find that at the date of said sale the said hams belonged to plaintiffs, or to Adams & Buckingham, for whom the plaintiffs acted as agents; and if the latter, that the plaintiffs had an interest in and control over the said hams, to cover advances and commissions; that defendants subsequently promised to pay plaintiffs



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the same, and that this suit was instituted before the price of said hams had been paid by defendants to Henry Lewis, then and in that event the plaintiffs are entitled to recover."

To this charge McCullough and Culbertson excepted, as well as to the refusal of the instructions moved for, and assign these decisions as errors in this court. The written contract, of November, 1853, which arranged the terms and course of business between the plaintiffs below (Roots & Coe) and Adams & Buckingham, their principal, with Henry Lewis, for the year 1854, confers on the former a plenary power to dispose of the consignments to be made, for advances under that contract. The contract of April did not alter or modify this term in the engagement. Henry Lewis was then in arrears to them. He had involved his brother Samuel in engagements, as his surety, which he could not fulfill. This contract of April was a relief and an accommodation to the brothers. The license to Henry Lewis to prepare the provisions for market, and to select the markets and purchasers, was an indulgence to him, and did not diminish the rights of Roots & Coe in the property or their powers under the contract. Whatever sales were made by him, were made as the agent of Roots & Coe, and they were entitled to control the price. He was not in a condition to dispute their title, and his authority to the plaintiffs in error to appropriate the price as a credit upon another demand was a fraud upon the rights of Roots & Coe and Adams & Buckingham. (*Zu-*

*lueta v. Vincent*, 12 L. and Eq. 145; *Bott v. McCoy*, 20 [ \* 354 ] *Ala.* 578; *Walcott v. Keith*, 2 Fost. N. H. \* R. 196.) We think the cause was fairly submitted to the jury in the charge of the court. The instructions prayed for by the plaintiffs in error present several questions which will now be considered.

They affirm, that if Samuel Lewis did not assent to the sale, nor waive his right to detain the property until his warehouse receipts were surrendered, and that Roots & Coe from time to time refused to surrender those receipts, and still control them, they cannot maintain an action for this money.

But the existence of these facts does not authorize the defendants (*McCullough et al.*) to resist the payment of the price of property they had purchased, and their possession of which had not been disturbed. Samuel Lewis had no title to the property, nor any power to sell it, nor any claim on the price. At most, he had only a lien, which he might never claim to exert, and from which the purchasers have experienced no injury. (*Holly v. Huggerford*, 8 Pick. 73; *Vibbard v. Johnson*, 19 John. 77; *Wanzer v. Truly*, 17 How. 584.)

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 Walton v. Cotton.
 

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Nor can the purchasers aver that Henry Lewis had no intention to act as the agent of Roots & Coe in making the sale, and in doing so he did not waive any right of Samuel Lewis, nor enlarge or impair the claim of Roots & Coe upon the property; but that he, and those claiming from him, are simply tortfeasors, and that Roots & Coe cannot claim the entire purchase money, because their title does not embrace the entire property and right to possession. The relations of Roots & Coe to Henry Lewis were such that he cannot be deemed a tortfeasor, except by their election. They are authorized to adopt his acts, and to claim the benefit of his contracts. He was their bailee, and is estopped to deny their title in any form. It is further insisted that the suit should have been instituted in the names of Adams & Buckingham, and not in those of Roots & Coe. But the contracts for the consignment of the hams, as well as for their preparation for the market and their sale, were made in the names of those persons. They are interested in their result to the extent of their commissions, and their principals reside in another State from themselves. The authorities cited sustain their title to maintain this suit.

Judgment affirmed.

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JOSIAH WALTON and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. ALLEN COTTON and others.

19 H. 355.

PENSION—HOW DISTRIBUTED AFTER DEATH OF PENSIONER.

1. The word "children," in the act of June 4, 1832, granting revolutionary pensions, is to be construed so as to include grandchildren, where the question of distribution among children is provided for in the act.
2. The right claimed in such a case being dependent on the construction of an act of congress, a writ of error lies to the judgment of a State court adverse to the right claimed under the act.

THIS is a writ of error to the supreme court of Tennessee, and the case is well stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Baxter*, for plaintiffs in error

*Mr. Lawrence*, for defendants.

Mr. Justice McLEAN delivered the opinion of the court.

This case comes before us by a writ of error to the supreme court of Tennessee.

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Walton v. Cotton.

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It was commenced by filing a bill, in Sumner county, before Chancellor Ridley, in which the complainants state they are the children of Priscilla Cotton and Thomas Cotton, who was a captain in the revolutionary war; that after his death, his widow, Priscilla, filed her declaration for a pension, on account of her husband. Josiah Walton made the application; but she died before the pension was granted. Walton administered on the estate, and he renewed the application, at great trouble and expense. The pension department allowed about one-half the amount claimed. Out of the money drawn by the administrator, he retained what was agreed for his services and the services of counsel, and paid over the residue, in equal shares, to all the children of Priscilla Cotton, and the representatives of her children who were dead.

The bill further represents that William E. Jones, who acts as an agent for pension claims, and Allen Cotton, with the view of getting the business and money into their hands, applied to the county court of Davidson county, and suppressed from said court the fact that an administration on said estate had been granted in the county of Sumner, and procured Allen Cotton to be appointed as administrator, which was done with the view of depriving the complainants and others of a legal portion of said pension fund.

The new administrator made application for the extension of the pension, so as to cover the whole time from the allowance of the pension to the death of the pensioner, only one-half of which had been granted. The application was successful; and Jones, under a power of attorney from the administrator, received the sum of \$3,500 from the government, which the defendants retain in their hands, and refuse to pay over; three-fifths of the amount of which the complainants are entitled to, if the children who died before the decease of their mother be not entitled to any share, and three-eighths, should they be entitled.

The answer admits many of the allegations of the bill, but denies that the defendants acted improperly in procuring administration in Davidson county. They admit that they applied for and obtained the above sum, with a full knowledge by the pension office of the prior administration. The money was paid to them as the only living children of Priscilla Cotton at the time of her death; and they allege that, this being the construction of the government, it is conclusive.

The chancellor, on the final hearing, decreed that the representatives of Arthur Cotton, John Cotton, and Polly Foxall, were entitled to three-fifths of said \$3,500, and interest, to be paid over to said children; and that said defendants, Noah Cotton, Allen Cot-

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ton, and William E. Jones, who have received said fund, are liable to pay over said three-fifths of \$3,500, amounting to \$2,100, with interest as aforesaid, to be paid over to the children of Polly Foxall, one-third; to the children of Arthur Cotton, one-third; and to the children of John Cotton, one-third, after paying the costs and expenses of their suit, the costs to be paid out of the fund in the hands of the defendants.

From this decree there was an appeal to the supreme court of Tennessee, which, on a hearing, reversed the decree of the chancellor, holding that the fund should be distributed among the living children at the time of the pensioner's death, and that no part of it should go to the representatives of deceased children.

As the complainants claim a right under an act of congress, which by the decree of the supreme court has been rejected, the case is brought within the twenty-fifth section of the judiciary act, which gives us jurisdiction.

The first section of the act entitled "An act supplementary to the 'act for the relief of certain surviving officers of the revolution,'" dated June 4th, 1832, gave pensions to surviving officers, non-commissioned officers, musicians, soldiers, and Indian spies, who had served in the continental line, or State troops, volunteers, or militia, at one or more terms—a period of two years—during the war of the revolution, &c., and \* Cotton was [ \* 357 ] entitled to receive his full pay, not exceeding the pay of a captain in the line, from the 4th of March, 1831, during his natural life. The fourth section of the same act provided that the amount of pay which accrued under the act before its date should be paid to the person entitled to the same as soon as may be; and in case of the death of any person embraced by the act, or of the act to which it is supplementary, during the period intervening between the semi-annual payments directed to be made and the death of such person, shall be paid to his widow, or, if he leave no widow, to his children.

The act of July 4th, 1836, in the first section, gives five years' half pay to widows, or children not sixteen years of age, under certain circumstances. If the soldier had died since the 4th March, 1831, and before the passage of that act, the pension which had accrued during these periods is given by the second section to the widow, and if no widow, to the children. The act of the 7th July, 1838, extends the benefits of the third section of the act of 1836 to widows whose husbands have died since the passage of the act. The act of 19th July, 1840, enacts, in the first section, that any male pensioner dying, leaving children and no widow, the pension due

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shall be paid to his children, and that it shall not be considered assets of said estate.

The second section provides, when a female pensioner shall die, leaving children, the amount due at the time of her death shall be paid to her representatives, for the benefit of her children. And the third section declares, "that on the death of any pensioner, male or female, leaving children, the amount due may be paid to any one or each of them, as they may prefer, without the intervention of an administrator."

The question in the case turns upon the construction of these statutes. Does a right construction of them give the pension due to the grandchildren of the deceased pensioner; and if so, does the bounty extend to the representatives of his children who died before his decease; or, do the acts restrict the bounty to his children living at the time of his death? This last construction has been adopted and acted upon by the government.

This view is mainly founded on the considerations, that on the death of the pensioner, the bounty is given to his widow, and, if he leave no widow, to his children; that it was a bounty of the government, arising from personal considerations of gratitude for services rendered, is not liable to the claims of creditors, and should not be extended, by construction, to persons not named in the act.

[ \* 358 ] \*The pension is undoubtedly a bounty of the government, and in the hands of an administrator of a deceased pensioner it would not be liable to the claims of creditors, had the acts of congress omitted such a provision. But the legislative intent is shown to be in accordance, in this respect, with the law. But should the word children, as used in these statutes, be more restricted than when used in a will? In the construction of wills, unless there is something to control a different meaning, the word children is often held to mean grandchildren. There is no argument which can be drawn from human sympathy, to exclude grandchildren from the bounty, whether we look to the donors or to the chief recipient.

Congress, from high motives of policy, by granting pensions, alleviate, as far as they may, a class of men who suffered in the military service by the hardships they endured and the dangers they encountered. But to withhold any arrearage of this bounty from his grandchildren, who had the misfortune to be left orphans, and give it to his living children, on his decease, would not seem to be a fit discrimination of national gratitude.

Under the construction given by the department, if a male pen-

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sioner die, leaving no widow or children, but grandchildren, the pension cannot be drawn from the treasury. This would seem to stop short of carrying out the humane motive of congress. They have not named grandchildren in the acts; but they are included in the equity of the statutes. And the argument that the pension is a gratuity, and was intended to be personal, will apply as well to grandchildren as to children.

There can be no doubt that congress had a right to distribute this bounty at their pleasure, and to declare it should not be liable to the debts of the beneficiaries. But they will be presumed to have acted under the ordinary influences which lead to an equitable and not a capricious result. And where the language used may be so construed as to carry out a benign policy, within the reasonable intent of congress, it should be done.

On a deliberate consideration of the above statutes, we have come to the conclusion that the word children, in the acts, embraces the grandchildren of the deceased pensioner, whether their parents died before or after his decease. And we think they are entitled, *per stirpes*, to a distributive share of the deceased parent.

This construction does not correspond with the decree of the chancellor, nor with that which was expressed by the supreme court in reversing his decree. The decree of the supreme court of Tennessee is therefore reversed, and the case \* is directed [ \* 359 ] to be transmitted to that court, that the views here given may be carried into effect, in the ordinary mode of proceeding by that court.

Mr. Justice DANIEL, Mr. Justice CURTIS, and Mr. Justice CAMPBELL, dissented.

Mr. Justice CURTIS dissenting.

I cannot concur in so much of the opinion, just delivered, as construes the word "children," in this act of congress, to mean children and grandchildren. The legal signification of the word children accords with its popular meaning, and designates the immediate offspring. (*Adams v. Law*, 17 How. 419, and cases there cited.) It may be used in a more enlarged sense to include issue; but the intention so to employ it must be manifested by the context, or by the subject-matter. I see nothing in the context or the subject-matter of this act to carry the meaning of the word children beyond its ordinary signification. Nothing has been suggested, save the conviction felt by some members of the court, that grandchildren are proper subjects of this bounty of congress. This



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consideration is, in my opinion, too indeterminate to enable me to construe the act to mean what it has not said.

Mr. Justice DANIEL and Mr. Justice CAMPBELL concurred in the above opinion of Mr. Justice CURTIS.

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THE STEAMBOAT SULTANA.

SAMUEL F. PRATT and others, Appellants, v. CHARLES M. REED.

19 H. 359.

MARITIME LIEN FOR SUPPLIES.

In order to establish a maritime lien for supplies furnished, the burden of proof is on the libellant to establish not only the necessity for the supplies, but the necessity that the credit of the vessel should be relied on for payment. But see *The Grapeshot*, 9 Wallace, 129.

THIS was an appeal from the circuit court for the northern district of New York, and the case is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Rogers*, for appellants.

*Mr. Ganson*, for appellees.

[ \* 360 ] \*Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from the circuit court of the United States for the northern district of New York, in admiralty.

The libel was filed by Reed, the respondent, against the steamboat Sultana, to recover for supplies furnished said boat.

The claimants in the court below set up, by way of defense, a mortgage executed to them, by the master and owner, upon the Sultana, dated the 31st October, 1853, to secure the sum of five thousand three hundred and fifty-four dollars and ninety-eight cents. The mortgage was duly recorded in the office of the customs at Buffalo, the place of the enrollment of the vessel, and was also filed in the office of the clerk of the county of Erie. The demand claimed in the libel was a running account for the supply of coal at Erie, in the State of Pennsylvania, extending from June, 1852, to May, 1854. The claimants admitted, in their answer, the supply set up in the libel, and also that it was represented to be necessary at the times delivered, to enable the vessel to pursue her business upon Erie and other western lakes.

The answer denies that the supplies were furnished upon the

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credit of the boat; but, on the contrary, avers they were furnished on the credit of the master.

The agreed facts in the case admit that there was no representation of the necessity of the supplies, other than that they were directed by the master at the times when furnished, and that the libellant knew, at these several times, that Appleby, the master, was the sole owner of the *Sultana*; that he usually navigated the boat, as master, and was present when the supplies were furnished. When not present, they were furnished at the request of the person in command.

Although it does not distinctly appear in the case, yet it is fairly to be inferred, that this vessel was engaged in making regular trips upon the western lakes, in the business of carrying passengers and freight, and procured her supplies of coal at places of convenient distance, according to her necessities, by a previous understanding with the parties furnishing the article. The bill rendered by the libellant contains a running account of debit and credit, through a period of nearly two years.

There is no great doubt in the case, but that the article was necessary for the navigation of the vessel at the times when furnished, though the proof is very loose and indefinite.

It seems to have been taken for granted, that a supply of \*coal was essential to the propelling of a steamboat, [ \*361 ] and, in a general sense, this is doubtless true; but then, to make out a necessity within the admiralty rule, the supply must be really or apparently necessary at the time when it is furnished. But the more serious difficulty in the case, on the part of the libellant, is the entire absence of any proof, to show that there was also a necessity, at the time of procuring the supplies, for a credit upon the vessel. This proof is as essential as that of the necessity of the article itself. The vessel is not subject to a lien for a common debt of the master or owner. It is only under very special circumstances, and in an unforeseen and unexpected emergency, that an implied maritime hypothecation can be created. It seems, also, to be supposed that circumstances of less pressing necessity, for supplies or repairs, and an implied hypothecation of the vessel to procure them, will satisfy the rule, than in a case of a necessity, sufficient to justify a loan of money on bottomry, for the like purpose. We think this a misapprehension.

The only difference is, that before a bottomry bond can be given, an additional fact must appear, namely, that the master could not procure the money, without giving the extraordinary interest incident to that species of security. This distinction was attempted in

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the case of *The Alexander*, (1 Wm. Rob. 336,) but was rejected by Dr. Lushington. A principle, also excluding any such distinction, has been laid down at this term, in the case of *William Thomas and others v. J. W. Osborn*.

Now, the supplies having been furnished at a fixed place, according to the account current, and apparently under some general understanding and arrangement, the presumption is, that there could be no necessity for the implied hypothecation of the vessel—there could be no unexpected or unforeseen exigency to require it. For aught that appears, the supplies could have been procured on the personal credit of the master, and in this case especially, as he was also the owner.

We do not say that the mere fact of the master being owner, of itself, excludes the possibility of a case of necessity that would justify an implied hypothecation; but it is undoubtedly a circumstance that should be attended to, in ascertaining whether any such necessity existed in the particular case. (1 Wm. Rob. 369, *The Sophie*.)

These maritime liens, in the coasting business, and in the business upon the lakes and rivers, are greatly increasing; and, as they are tacit and secret, are not to be encouraged, but should be strictly limited to the necessities of commerce which created them.

[ \* 362 ] Any relaxation of the law, in this respect, will \* tend to perplex and embarrass business, rather than furnish facilities to carry it forward.

After the fullest consideration, we think the decree below was erroneous, and should be reversed, and that the mortgagees are entitled to the proceeds in the registry.

This is the case of a foreign ship, the vessel belonging at Buffalo as her home port, and the debt contracted at Erie, in the State of Pennsylvania. We do not intend to express any opinion as to the necessity required to create liens upon vessels, under the local law of the States.

Decree reversed, and proceeds ordered to be paid to the mortgagees.

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THE STEAMBOAT SULTANA.

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DANIEL TOD and others, Appellants, *v.* SAMUEL F. PRATT and others.

19 H. 362.

The decision in the preceding case reasserted.

THE case is an appeal from the circuit court, for the northern

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district of New York, and was similar to the preceding one, and involved the same question.

Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the northern district of New York, in admiralty.

The libel was filed by the appellants in the court below, to recover for supplies furnished the steamboat Sultana, at Cleveland, in the State of Ohio. The supplies furnished were coal, which, according to the account current, began in April, 1853, and continued from time to time till April, 1854.

The defense set up was the mortgage which has been referred to in the case of Pratt and others v. Reed, just decided. There was also a second ground of defense, which it is not material to notice. The district court decreed in favor of the defendants, except as it respects some five hundred dollars, which item has not been appealed from. The circuit court affirmed the decree.

The case falls within the principles stated in that above referred to, and which determined that the mortgagees were entitled to the proceeds of the vessel in the registry. This was the result of the decision of the court below, and the decree is therefore affirmed.

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THE UNITED STATES, Appellants, v. THOMAS W. SUTHERLAND, Guardian, &c.

19 H. 363.

LAND CLAIMS IN CALIFORNIA.

1. The small value attached to land in California by the Mexican government, and its almost exclusive use for pasturage and stockraising, considered in construing the validity of grants as to quantity.
2. The want of surveying instruments, and the above consideration, affect also the question of precision in description of boundaries in such grant.
3. Therefore, that a grant is of eleven leagues in quantity is no sufficient objection to it; and, if the *disefio*, or imperfect map, with other description accompanying the *espediente*, will enable the surveyor to locate it, these are sufficient.

THIS is an appeal from the district court for the southern district of California.

The case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the United States.

*Mr. Rose*, for appellees.

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Mr. Justice GRIER delivered the opinion of the court.

The defendants in error filed their petition before the board of commissioners for ascertaining and settling private land claims in California, claiming "a tract of land called El Cahon, containing eleven sitios de ganado mayor, situated in the county of San Diego, by virtue of a grant in fee made to their mother, Doña Maria Antonio Estudillo de Pedrorena, by Pio Pico, governor of California, bearing date 23d of September, 1845, and approved by the territorial deputation on the 3d of October, 1845."

The only question arising in this case, which has not been disposed of in former decisions of this court, is the objection "that the grant is void for uncertainty," because it defines neither boundaries nor quantity. The authenticity of the grant and confirmation are proved, and do not appear to have been disputed before the commissioners. It is in evidence, also, that Doña Maria and her husband went into possession of the place called "El Cahon" in the year 1845, and have made it "the best cultivated rancho in the country about San Diego." It had formerly belonged to the mission of San Diego. The mission was in debt to the husband of Doña Maria, and agreed to transfer their right of occupancy on this rancho to her, in satisfaction of her husband's debt.

Judicial possession was not delivered till September, 1846, after the establishment of the American authority, which was in July of that year. And whether void or valid, the expediente of possession made by the officer, Santiago E. Arguello, (who [ \* 364 ] \* could not get the assistance of a surveyor,) seems to throw little light on the subject of precise boundary.

But, under the circumstances, the want of such juridical delivery of possession will not affect the title of the petitioners, unless the grant be absolutely void for uncertainty. The description of the land granted is to be found in the following language in the patent or expediente: "A tract of land known by the name of El Cahon, near the mission of San Diego." And again: "The land of which grant is made is that which the map (*diseño*) attached to the respective expediente expresses," &c. "The judge who may give the possession shall inform the government of the number of sitios de ganado mayor it contains."

In construing grants of land in California, made under the Spanish or Mexican authorities, we must take into view the state of the country and the policy of the government. The population of California before its transfer to the United States was very sparse, consisting chiefly of a few military posts and some inconsiderable villages. The millions of acres of land around them, with the ex-

ception of a mission or a rancho on some favored spot, were uninhabited and uncultivated. It was the interest and the policy of the king of Spain, and afterwards of the Mexican government, to make liberal grants of these lands to those who would engage to colonize or settle upon them. Where land is plenty and labor scarce, pasturage and raising of cattle promised the greatest reward with the least labor. Hence, persons who established ranchos required and readily received grants of large tracts of country as a range for pasturage for their numerous herds. Under such circumstances, land was not estimated by acres or arpents. A square league, or "sitio de ganado mayor," appears to have been the only unit in estimating the superficies of land. Eleven of these leagues was the usual extent for a rancho grant. If more or less was intended in the grant, it was carefully stated. Surveying instruments or surveyors were seldom to be obtained in distant locations. The applicant for land usually accompanied his petition with a *diseño*, or map, showing the natural boundaries or monuments of the tract desired. These were usually rivers, creeks, rivulets, hills, and mountain ranges. The distances between these monuments were often estimated at *about* so many leagues, and fractions of this unit little regarded. To those who deal out land by the acre, such monuments as hills, mountains, &c., though fixed, would appear rather as vague and uncertain boundary lines. But where land had no value, and the unit of measurement was a league, such monuments were considered to be sufficiently certain.

\*Since this country has become a part of the United [ \* 365 ] States, these extensive rancho grants, which then had little value, have now become very large and very valuable estates. They have been denounced as "enormous monopolies, princedoms," &c., and this court have been urged to deny to the grantees what it is assumed the former governments have too liberally and lavishly granted. This rhetoric might have a just influence, when urged to those who have a right to give or refuse. But the United States have bound themselves by a treaty to acknowledge and protect all *bona fide* titles granted by the previous government; and this court have no discretion to enlarge or curtail such grants, to suit our own sense of property, or defeat just claims, however extensive, by stringent technical rules of construction, to which they were not originally subjected.

The patent to the claimant's mother confers a title in fee to an estate "known by the name of El Cahon," or "The Chest." It describes it as lying "near the mission of San Diego." It therefore



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assumes, that there is an estate or rancho having such a name, and having some known boundaries.

It is *prima facie* evidence of such a fact. Those who allege that it is void for uncertainty, must prove either that there are two estates called "El Cahon," near the mission of San Diego, to which the description in the patent would equally apply; in such case it would be void for ambiguity; or they must prove that there is no estate or property known by that name about San Diego. But there is not a particle of such evidence to be found on the record, nor was such a defense set up before the commissioners. For anything that appears, the "El Cahon" was as well known as San Diego itself. But the description of the patent does not end here; it is further described as "that which the *diseño* attached to the *espediente* expresses." This map or survey is thus made a part of the patent for the purpose of description. It exhibits a circular valley surrounded by hills or mountains, except at a narrow outlet on the eastern boundary, where a stream of water passes out. The course of the stream through the valley is traced, as also are the roads. The position of corrals, ranchos, cottages, &c., is carefully noted; on the east, a hill or mountain bounds the valley called "El Cahon;" on the west, "Cerro del Porsuele" and "Cerro de la Mesa;" the northern boundary, as a continuous circular hill or mountain without a name; the southern are broken hills, called "Lomas Altas." The cardinal points of the compass are given, and a scale of measurement, a single glance at which would show that the valley traced according to that scale would contain about ten leagues, or possibly eleven, the usual allowance for [ \* 366 ] such estates. There is no evidence \* whatever, tending to show that, with the assistance of this map, a surveyor would find any difficulty in locating it according to its calls.

In the cases of Fremont and of Larkin, the grants were much more vague than the present, and the same remark which was made in the latter case will equally apply to this, "No question appears to have been made as to the practicability of locating the grant in the tribunals below, nor do we see any ground upon which such a question could have been properly raised in the case.

The judgment is therefore affirmed.

Mr. Justice DANIEL dissented.

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Fellows v. Blacksmith.

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JOSEPH FELLOWS, Plaintiff in Error, v. SUSAN BLACKSMITH and others.

19 H. 366.

SENECA INDIANS—TRESPASS ON THEIR POSSESSIONS.

1. Notwithstanding the treaties of 1838 and 1842, between the Seneca Indians and the United States, by which they agreed to remove west of the Mississippi, no one can enforce their removal but the United States.
2. Hence a party who, under a grant from Massachusetts, is the owner of the land on which they reside, and entitled to possession on their removal, is a trespasser if he intrudes on them, though it be after the time limited by the treaty for their removal.

THIS is a writ of error to the supreme court of the State New York, and the matter is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Gillett* and *Mr. Brown*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Martindale*, for defendants.

Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of New York. The case was decided by the court of appeals of that State; but the record had been remitted, after the \*decis- [ \* 367 ] ion, to the supreme court, from which the appeal had been taken.

The suit in the supreme court was an action of trespass, *quare clausum fregit*, brought by the intestate, John Blacksmith, against the defendants, Joseph Fellows and Robert Kendle, for entering, with force and arms, into the close of the plaintiff, commonly known as an Indian sawmill and yard, at the town of Pembroke, county of Genesee, and then and there having expelled and dispossessed the said plaintiff.

The defendants plead, 1st, not guilty; and 2d, that the said close, &c., was the soil and freehold of the defendant, Fellows, and that the defendant, Fellows, in his own right, and the defendant, Kendle, as his servant, and by his command, broke and entered the said close, &c., as they lawfully might, for the cause aforesaid. To this plea there was a replication, averring that the close, soil, and freehold, was not the close of the defendant, Fellows.

On the trial, it was proved by the plaintiff that the close mentioned in the declaration is situate in the town of Pembroke, county of Genesee, upon a tract of land of twelve thousand eight hundred acres, commonly known as the Tonawanda reservation, and was, at the time of the entry complained of, an Indian improvement upon the same; that said improvement was made about twenty years before the treaty, by the plaintiff and seven other Tonawanda In-

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dians; that the plaintiff is a native Indian, belonging to the Tonawanda band of the Seneca Indians, who reside on that reservation, and are a part of the Seneca nation, and has so been known for at least thirty-six years; that he has resided on this reservation from his birth, and was in the actual possession of the said improvement at the time of the entry complained of; that on the 13th July, 1846, the defendants entered into and took possession of the said close, and turned the plaintiff out, and in doing so committed the trespass. It was admitted, that a treaty had been made between the United States and the Six Nations of Indians on the 11th November, 1794, by which certain lands in western New York, including this Tonawanda reservation, are declared "to be the property of the Seneca nation; and the United States will never claim the same, nor disturb the Seneca nation, nor any of the Six Nations, or their Indian friends residing thereon, and united with them in the free use and enjoyment thereof; but it shall remain theirs until they choose to sell the same to the people of the United States, who have the right to purchase."

The plaintiff then rested.

The defendants gave in evidence certain documents and [ \* 368 ] acts \* of the legislatures of the States of New York and

Massachusetts, showing that a dispute had arisen, at an early day, between the two States, in respect to the title to a large tract of land within the limits of New York, of which the *locus in quo* is a part. That in 1786, the dispute was amicably settled by a cession from Massachusetts to New York of the sovereignty and jurisdiction over the tract, and by a cession from New York to Massachusetts of the right of pre-emption to the soil from the Indians.

The lands were then in the independent occupancy of the Seneca nation, and owned by them, and that Massachusetts acquired by the cession the exclusive right of purchasing their title whenever they became disposed to sell; that this right had become duly vested in Thomas L. Ogden and Joseph Fellows, by proper conveyances from Massachusetts, which survived to the latter on the death of Ogden.

A treaty was then given in evidence, between the United States and the New York Indians, bearing date 15th January, 1838, and another between the United States and the Seneca nation, bearing date the 20th May, 1842, under which the defendant claims that he had acquired the Indian title to the close in question, and by virtue of which it is admitted the defense to the action in this case rests.

The treaty of 1838 (7 U. S. Stats. 551) set apart a tract of country, situated west of the State of Missouri, as a permanent home for all the New York Indians, containing one million eight hundred and

twenty-four acres of land, being, as is expressed in the treaty, "three hundred and twenty acres for each soul of said Indians, as their numbers are at present computed." The tract is particularly described and located. It was intended for the future home of nine tribes of Indians, containing, according to the official estimate, a population of five thousand four hundred and eighty-five. The Seneca tribe, including among them their friends, the Onondagas and Cayugas, numbers a population of two thousand six hundred and thirty-three.

By the tenth section of this treaty, special provision was made concerning this tribe and their friends already mentioned. They were to have assigned to them the easterly part of the tract set apart to the New York Indians, and to extend so far as to include one half section of land for each soul. The tribe agrees to remove from New York to their new home within five years, and continue to reside there. The section then recites the purchase of the title of the Seneca nation to certain lands described in a deed of conveyance by Ogden and Fellows, assignees of the State of Massachusetts, for the consideration \*of \$202,000, and [ \*369 ] also that the nation has agreed that said money shall be paid to the United States, and that out of this sum \$102,000 shall be paid to the owners of the improvements on the land so conveyed, the residue to be invested in stocks by the government, the income of which is to be paid annually to the nation at their new homes. The improvements were to be appraised, and a distribution of the \$102,000 made among the owners, and "to be paid by the United States to the individuals who were entitled to the same, &c., on their relinquishing their respective possessions to Ogden and Fellows."

By the fifteenth section of the treaty, the United States agree that they will appropriate the sum of \$400,000, to be applied from time to time, under the direction of the president of the United States, in such proportions as may be most for the interest of the Indians who were parties to the treaty, "to aid them in the removal to their homes, and in supporting them the first year after their removal; to encourage and assist them in education, and in being taught to cultivate their lands; in the erection of mills, houses," &c.

A large tract of land in Wisconsin that had been set apart to certain Indians was relinquished to the government.

The deed of conveyance from the Seneca nation to Ogden and Fellows, and referred to in the treaty, is annexed thereto. It conveys four reservations in western New York: the Buffalo Creek res-

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ervation, containing 49,920 acres; the Cattaraugus, 21,680 acres; the Alleghany, 30,469 acres; and the Tonawanda, 12,800 acres.

Some difficulty occurred in carrying this treaty into execution, which it is not important to refer to. These difficulties raised by the Indians resulted in a modification of it by a second treaty entered into on 20th May, 1842, which, after referring to the first, and to the deed of conveyance to Ogden and Fellows, and to the differences that had arisen between the parties, provides in the first article that Ogden and Fellows, in consideration of the release and agreements afterwards mentioned, stipulate that the Seneca nation might continue in the occupation and enjoyment of two of the reservations, the Cattaraugus and the Alleghany, the same as before the deed of conveyance. And in the second article, the Seneca nation, in consideration of the foregoing and other stipulations, agrees to release and confirm to Ogden and Fellows the two remaining reservations, the Buffalo Creek and the Tonawanda.

The third article provides for reducing the amount of the purchase money to be paid by Ogden and Fellows, so as to correspond with the relative value of the two reservations released to the value of the four, as fixed in the treaty of 1838.

[ \* 370 ] \*The fourth article provides for the appraisal of the land and improvements in these two reservations, by appraisers—one to be appointed by the secretary of war, and the other by Ogden and Fellows—and to report their proceedings to the secretary, and also to Ogden and Fellows.

The fifth article provides that the possession of the two tracts confirmed to Ogden and Fellows should be surrendered up as follows: the unimproved lands on the tracts within one month after the reports of the appraisers, and the improvements within two years, provided that the amount to be ascertained and awarded as the proportionate value of said improvements shall, on the surrender thereof, be paid to the president of the United States, to be distributed among the owners according to the determination of the appraisers; and provided, also, the consideration for the release and conveyance of the lands shall, at the time of the surrender thereof, be paid or secured to the satisfaction of the secretary of war, the income of which to be paid to the Seneca Indians annually.

The seventh article provides that the modification in this treaty of 1842 shall be a substitute for that of 1838, wherein it differs from it, and to this extent shall be deemed to repeal it.

It will be seen that the principal change under the second treaty consists in the release, by Ogden and Fellows, to the Indians, of

two of the four reservations conveyed to them under the treaty of 1838, and the corresponding reduction of the price to be paid. Most of the other provisions of the treaty are untouched, and remained in force. The assignment by the government of the large tract of country for the New York Indians west of the Missouri—the special tract therein assigned to this Seneca nation—their agreement to remove to their new homes, and the large appropriation to aid in their removal and in their support and encouragement after they had arrived—all these provisions remained unaffected by the second treaty.

Neither treaty made any provision as to the mode or manner in which the removal of the Indians or surrender of the reservations was to take place. The grantees have assumed that they were authorized to take forcible possession of the two reservations, or of the four, as the case would have been under the first treaty. The plaintiff in this case was expelled by force; and unless this mode of removal can be sustained, the recovery against the defendants for the trespass was right, and must be affirmed.

The removal of tribes and nations of Indians from their ancient possessions to their new homes in the west, under \*treaties made with them by the United States, have been [ \* 371 ] according to the usage and practice of the government, by its authority and under its care and superintendence. And, indeed, it is difficult to see how any other mode of a forcible removal can be consistent with the peace of the country, or with the duty of the government to these dependent people, who have been influenced by its counsel and authority to change their habitations.

The negotiations with them as a *quasi* nation, possessing some of the attributes of an independent people, and to be dealt with accordingly, would seem to lead to the conclusion, unless otherwise expressly stipulated, that the treaty was to be carried into execution by the authority or power of the government, which was a party to it; and more especially, when made with a tribe of Indians who are in a state of pupillage, and hold the relation to the government as a ward to his guardian. It is difficult to believe that it could have been intended by the government that these people were to be left, after they had parted with their title to their homes, to be expelled by the irregular force and violence of the individuals who had acquired it, or through the intervention of the courts of justice. As we have seen, the Seneca nation upon the four reservations consisted of a population of some two thousand six hundred and thirty-three souls; and if we include the Tuscaroras, whose lands were also pur-



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chased under the same treaty, nearly three thousand. It is obvious that any such litigation would be appalling.

If we look into the provisions of the two treaties, we think the conclusion as clear, from a consideration of them, that no such means or manner of removal were contemplated, as that derived from a consideration of their unfitness and impropriety under the circumstances stated.

The treaty of 1838 contemplated a removal to the tract west of the State of Missouri, and putting the Indians in possession of it. A large fund was appropriated, and in the hands of the government, to be disbursed in aid of such removal, and of their support and encouragement after their arrival. It did not, therefore, separate these Indians from the care and protection of the government on its ratification, but contemplated further duties towards them, and for which means were supplied. Besides, the purchase money for the reservations was to be paid to the government; and, by the express terms of the treaty of 1842, the appraised value of the improvements was, on the *surrender of the possessions, to be paid to the president of the United States, to be distributed among the owners of the improvements according to the award of the appraisers.*

[ \*372 ] This provision shows, \* that the government was to be present at the surrender and payment for the improvements.

The clause in the treaty of 1838 is still more specific, which was, that the improvements were "to be paid by the United States to the individuals who were entitled to the same," &c., "on their relinquishing their respective possessions to the said Ogden and Fellows." It is also worthy of remark, that the St. Regis Indians, one of the nine tribes of the New York Indians, in giving their assent to the treaty of 1838, deemed it necessary to guard against a forcible removal to the west, by a clause providing that they "shall not be compelled to remove under the treaty;" a removal to the west being in contemplation.

We think, therefore, that the grantees derived no power, under the treaty, to dispossess by force these Indians, or right of entry, so as to sustain an ejectment in a court of law; that no private remedy of this nature was contemplated by the treaty, and that a forcible removal must be made, if made at all, under the direction of the United States; that this interpretation is in accordance with the usages and practice of the government in providing for the removal of Indian tribes from their ancient possessions, with the fitness and propriety of the thing itself, and with the fair import of the language of the several articles bearing upon the subject.

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An objection was taken, on the argument, to the validity of the treaty, on the ground that the Tonawanda band of the Seneca Indians were not represented by the chiefs and head men of the band in the negotiations and execution of it. But the answer to this is, that the treaty, after executed and ratified by the proper authorities of the government, becomes the supreme law of the land, and the courts can no more go behind it for the purpose of annulling its effect and operation, than they can behind an act of congress. (1 Cranch, 103; 6 Pet. 735; 10 How. 442; 2 Pet. 307, 309, 314; 3 Story Const. Law, p. 695.)

The view we have taken of the case makes it unnecessary to examine the ground upon which the learned court below placed their decision; that court held the appraisal of the improvements, and payment therefor, were conditions precedent to the surrender of them by the Indians; and that the refusal of the Tonawanda band to permit the appraisal did not excuse the performance of these conditions. The ground upon which we have placed our judgment is not in conflict with this view. We hold that the performance was not a duty that belonged to the grantees, but for the government under the treaty.

\* We think the judgment of the court below right, and [ \* 373 ] should be affirmed.

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ENOCH C. ROBERTS, Plaintiff in Error, v. JAMES M. COOPER.

19 H. 373.

APPEAL BOND—MOTION FOR ADDITIONAL SECURITY.

In an action of ejectment brought to this court by defendant below, against whom there was a judgment, this court cannot order an increased amount of security, by way of enlarged bond, on the ground of apprehended loss to defendant in error.

THIS was a motion for additional security on a writ of error bond, the plaintiff in error having a judgment against him in the court below for the possession of the land.

The matter is sufficiently stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Vinton*, for the motion.

*Mr. Romeyn*, opposed.

Mr. Justice WAYNE delivered the opinion of the court.

In this case, Roberts, who is the plaintiff in error, on the allowance of the writ of error, gave security in the sum of one thousand

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dollars, conditioned that he would prosecute his writ to effect, and answer all damages and costs if he failed to make his plea good. Cooper now declares that the bond for one thousand dollars is not sufficient to answer all the damages and costs, if Roberts should fail to prosecute his writ to effect, and refers to an affidavit filed by him as the basis of this motion to show that fact.

Mr. Vinton, counsel of Cooper, now moves the court for an order requiring Roberts to give additional security in the sum [ \* 374 ] \* of twenty-five thousand dollars, or such other sum as the court may deem to be sufficient to cover all damages which Cooper may suffer, if the writ of error should not be prosecuted with effect.

The case between the parties is for the recovery of land in ejectment. Cooper represents that he holds the legal title to the land in controversy in trust for the National Mining Company, incorporated by the legislature of the State of Michigan, to carry on the business of mining for copper, and that he is the secretary and treasurer of the company; that he instituted this suit to recover the possession of this land for them, that they might have the use and occupation of it for their chartered purposes. It is also stated by the affiant that a decision had been given by the supreme court of the United States at its last term, on a writ of error to the circuit court for the district of Michigan, between the same parties in controversy, for the same land, establishing, on the merits of the case, the title of the affiant to the land, and that the mining company, in consequence of it, had prepared to prosecute its mining business to the extent of their ability upon the land, which is known to contain a very valuable deposit of copper ore, which could be worked with great profit; and that the company was prevented from working the deposit, in consequence of the pending writ of error, which Roberts sued out upon a judgment which had been rendered in this case against him, and in favor of the legal title of the affiant, *in the circuit court of the United States for the district of Michigan, at its last term.* And the affiant also states that the damages which the company will sustain by the delay caused by the writ of error will amount to at least the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, and to a larger amount, if Roberts shall not prosecute his writ of error to effect.

We have not been able to find a precedent for this motion. The counsel making it did not cite one, but relied upon that part of the twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth sections of the judiciary act of 1789, the first of which declares that every justice or judge signing a citation on any writ of error shall take good and

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sufficient security that the plaintiff in error shall prosecute his writ to effect, and answer all damages and costs if he fail to make his plea good, which, considered in connection with the twenty-third and twenty-fourth sections, he thought, empowered this court to grant the motion. In our interpretation, and the proper application of those sections, regard must be had to the nature of the action upon which a writ of error has been brought, and to the damages to which a plaintiff who has had a verdict and \*judgment may be entitled. If it be for a money demand, [ \* 375 ] on which a sum certain has been given by a judgment, it is the duty of the judge, who signs the citation on a writ of error, to take care that good and sufficient security is given. Should it be neglected, and it shall be brought to the notice of this court, when such a case is before it upon a writ of error, upon a motion to enlarge the security, this court would take care that the party claiming its intervention should have the full benefit of the security intended by the law, on a case when the writ of error was a *supersedeas*.

But when a verdict and judgment upon it has been had in ejectment, on which nominal damages are only awarded, (except in cases between landlord and tenant, and that in England, in virtue of the statute of 1 George IV, chap. 87, sec. 2,) and a writ of error has been sued out by the defendant, and security given, as has been done in this case, this court cannot interfere to enlarge the security, to cover damages which a plaintiff may recover in an action for mesne profits, or for any other losses which he may allege he will sustain by being kept out of the possession of his land by any delay there may be in prosecuting the writ of error. Besides, this court cannot award damages in any case brought to it by writ of error, or require an enlargement of a bond given upon a writ of error, except as it is authorized to do in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth sections of the judiciary act of 1789, neither of which comprehend cases of apprehended losses, except when they are a part of the original suit, and then only "when its reversal is in favor of the plaintiff, or petitioner in the original suit, and the damages to be assessed or the matter to be decreed are uncertain; *in which case*, the cause is remanded for a final decision."

We must deny this motion. It is not provided for by any legislation of congress. And the utmost extent for which the enlargement of security upon nominal damages in ejectment has been found necessary in England, is given by the statute 16 Charles II, sec. 8; and that is, where a defendant there brings error, he may be bound to the plaintiff in such reasonable sum as the court shall think

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McRea v. Branch Bank of Alabama.

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proper, which sum has been settled at double the amount of one year's rent. (4 Burrows, 2,502.) The courts in England will also oblige a defendant in ejectment, who brings error, to enter into a rule or undertaking not to commit waste or destruction pending the writ. (3 Burrows, 1,823; Palmer's Practice in the House of Lords, 159.)

The motion to enlarge the security in this case is overruled.

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MARGARET McREA and others, Appellants, v. THE BRANCH OF THE  
BANK OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA AT MOBILE.

19 H. 376.

FRAUDULENT CONVEYANCES—PARTIES TO SUITS IN EQUITY.

1. Where a bill is filed by a creditor to assert a lien given to secure a surety in the principal debt, the surety, and the trustee in the deed by which the lien was given, are necessary parties.
2. But where the same bill seeks relief, on the ground of a conveyance by the debtor to his sister, for the purpose of defrauding the creditor, the bill may be sustained without the parties to the other transaction being brought before the court.

THIS is an appeal from the circuit court for the eastern district of Arkansas, and the case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Lawrence*, for appellee.

No counsel for appellants.

Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court.

This is an appeal from a decree of the circuit court of the United States for the eastern district of Arkansas.

It appears from the allegations of the bill, which are supported by the proofs, that in December, 1843, John D. Bracy, then a resident of Alabama, borrowed of the Branch of the Bank of the State of Alabama at Mobile, (the appellees in this [ \* 377 ] \* case,) the sum of \$9,065, and that Maria Matheson, who was his mother, and another person, joined in the promissory note which was given to the bank for the loan. To indemnify Mrs. Matheson, Bracy conveyed certain negro slaves to one Gale, in trust, to save her harmless. The debt not being paid at maturity, the bank recovered a judgment on it in November, 1845. The trustee afterwards sold some of the slaves, and their price was applied to reduce the debt; but some time in the year 1846, Bracy privately left the State of Alabama, and carried away with him

the residue of the slaves, and some other property, not leaving, so far as appears, any other property in that State, out of which the judgment in favor of the bank could be satisfied. He appears to have been for a time in the State of Mississippi. Some time in 1847 he went to Louisiana; and in the year 1848 he removed with these slaves to White county, in the State of Arkansas, where he employed them in making some improvements on a tract of government land, where he and they resided. In September, 1849, Bracy went to Louisiana, where Margaret McRea, his sister, one of the appellants, then resided, and there made a bill of sale of all the slaves to her. She sent one of her sons to take possession of them; and Bracy also returned to their place of residence, in White county, where he continued to reside until the spring of 1850, when Mrs. McRea moved thither; and from that time they resided together, she having entered the land on which the plantation was, and taken a title in her own name. Bracy continued to reside there, having the principal ostensible management of the business of the plantation, until about a year before his decease, in April, 1852, when he removed to the county town, about six miles distant, to practice his profession as an attorney. He died deeply insolvent, the debts proved against his estate being upwards of fourteen thousand dollars; the sales of all his inventoried effects amounting only to the sum of \$345.90. The bill asserts a lien on these slaves by virtue of the trust deed, of which it avers Mrs. McRea had notice when she purchased. But our opinion is, that Gale, the trustee, and Mrs. Matheson, the *cestui que trust*, are indispensable parties to a bill for the subjection of this property to the claim of the bank, by virtue of the trust deed. Upon that footing the bill cannot be maintained.

But we are all of opinion, that the sale to Mrs. McRea was in fraud of creditors, and especially of the bank. Without detailing the evidence, we think it enough to say, that the removal of the property from Alabama by Bracy, leaving the judgment of the bank unsatisfied, his insolvency, the relation between the parties, their subsequent residence together, the \* manner [ \* 378 ] in which the property was held and managed, are causes of very grave suspicion. The bill charges, that if this property was conveyed to her, "it was so conveyed with intent and for the purpose of hindering, delaying, and defrauding the creditors of the said John D. Bracy." The answer of Mrs. McRae does not deny this allegation.

In the course of responding to the claim of the bill founded on the trust deed, her answer says: "She therefore charges, that there



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Michigan Central Railroad Co v. Michigan Southern Railroad Co.

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was no encumbrance whatever on the said slaves, or any of them, at the time she purchased them, and avers that she purchased them in good faith, and without any notice or knowledge whatever of a subsisting lien upon them by virtue of said deed of trust." We understand this averment of good faith on her part to relate simply to her ignorance of a lien by the trust deed, and that it does not meet the explicit allegation in the bill, that the purpose of the sale was to conceal the property from creditors; and though the failure of the answer to meet this charge in the bill does not operate as a technical confession of its truth, it does lay a foundation for the belief that if the defendant could have truly denied it, she would not have foregone the decided advantage of such a denial in an answer which puts the complainant on proof of the contested fact by more than one witness.

The answer alleges, that the agreed price of the sale was \$3,500, payable in installments of \$875 each, in five, six, seven, and eight years; and that four promissory notes were executed accordingly. It does not say what was done with the notes, after they were executed. No such notes were found among the effects of Bracy to be inventoried. Neither of these notes, if in existence, had become payable when this bill was filed, and we think the attempt to show that something had been paid on account of them by the delivery of some cotton is not successful.

In our opinion, the charge in the bill, that the sale was fraudulent as to creditors, is made out in proof, and this is sufficient to sustain the decree of the circuit court.

The decree of the circuit court is affirmed with costs.

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THE MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY, Plaintiffs in Error, v.  
THE MICHIGAN SOUTHERN RAILROAD COMPANY.

19 H. 378.

JURISDICTION ON WRIT TO STATE COURTS.

1. This court can only look to the record to ascertain its appellate jurisdiction under the 25th section of the judiciary act, and the opinion of the court is no part of the record.
2. Where it appears that the judgment of the State court involved only the construction of State statutes admitted to be valid, this court has no jurisdiction.

WRIT of error to the supreme court of the State of Michigan. The case was decided on a motion to dismiss for want of jurisdiction, and the matter is fully stated in the opinion.

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Michigan Central Railroad Co. v. Michigan Southern Railroad Co.

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*Mr. Walker* moved to dismiss.

*Mr. Joy* opposed.

\* *Mr. Justice GRIER* delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 379 ]

This case is before us on a motion to dismiss for want of jurisdiction.

It is a bill in chancery originating in the circuit court of Wayne county, in the State of Michigan, and afterwards taken by appeal to the supreme court of the State.

In order to give this court jurisdiction under the 25th section of the judiciary act, the record of the case must show, by direct averment or necessary intendment, that one of the questions enumerated in that section did arise, and was decided by the State court, as required.

If the subject of complaint be, that a State statute is repugnant to the constitution of the United States, and therefore void, and that the State court has declared it to be valid, this fact should appear by some direct averment, either on the bill or answer, or in the decree of the court.

After scrutinizing with great care the rather prolix pleadings of this case, we are unable to find any complaint, by the bill or answer, that the legislature of Michigan have passed any act affecting the rights of either party which "impairs the obligation of a contract;" nor is there an intimation in the decree that any such question arose in the case; nor is there any necessary intendment that such a question did arise, and was necessarily decided, from anything that does appear in the pleadings, evidence, or decree; on the contrary, it shows affirmatively that no such question did or could arise.

This will clearly appear from an examination of the bill and answer.

The bill alleges, that the complainants were incorporated by an act entitled "An act to authorize the sale of the Central railroad and to incorporate the Michigan Central Railroad Company," approved March 28, 1846; that they purchased the Central railroad, according to the terms of their charter, and \* have [ \* 380 ] since that time completed and run said railroad; that, at the time of the act, the State of Michigan owned both the Central and Southern railroads; that the management of the Central road was found onerous and unprofitable; that it was an object to sell the same; that the road was not worth, to exceed \$800,000; and that the franchises and exclusive rights secured by the charter alone made it worth the sum they paid, viz: \$2,000,000; and that it was

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for the interest of the State to grant such franchises and exclusive rights, and that the exclusive privileges secured to them by the following provision in section five of their charter were especially valuable to them, and without which they would not have purchased said road:

“And no railroad or railroads from the eastern or southern boundary of the State shall be built or constructed or maintained, or shall be authorized to be built, constructed, or maintained, by or under any law of this State, any portion of which shall approach, westwardly of Wayne county, within five miles of the line of said railroad, as designated in this act, without the consent of this company.”

The bill further alleges, that the State at the same time resolved to sell the Southern railroad, but that said sale was only to take effect on the completion of the sale of the said Central railroad; that it was well understood by the complainants, the State, and the defendants, (the Southern Railroad Company,) that the sale of said Southern railroad was subordinate to the sale of the Central railroad, and that the act incorporating the said Michigan Southern Railroad Company, approved May 9, 1846, was subject to the complainants' charter; and that, by the sixth section of that act of incorporation, it is provided as follows:

“And the said Southern Railroad Company shall also, within three years after the passage of this act, extend, construct, and complete the Tecumseh branch from the village of Tecumseh, by way of Clinton, to the village of Jackson, by way of Manchester, and along the line of railroads formerly authorized to be constructed by the Jacksonburgh and Palmyra Railroad Company, *or so far along the same as may not conflict with the provisions of an act entitled ‘An act to authorize the sale of the Central railroad, and to incorporate the Michigan Central Railroad Company,’ approved March 28, 1846, and put the same in operation, with sufficient motive power to do the business of the country depending on said branch.*”

The bill further alleges, that the defendants are threatening to construct, and are taking the preliminary steps for constructing, said Tecumseh branch to the village of Jackson, and that ten miles of said branch railroad, if constructed, will be within [ \* 381 ] \* five miles of the complainants' railroad; and that said branch, together with the Erie and Kalamazoo railroad from Toledo to Adrian, and the Michigan Southern Railroad to Monroe, will, in fact and effect, constitute one railroad, both to the eastern and southern boundary of the State, and therefore will be

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an invasion of the rights and privileges guarantied to the complainants by that provision of their charter before cited, and *beyond the powers granted to said Southern company*; and therefore an injunction is prayed for.

The answer of the defendants denies that the provision of the complainants' charter above cited applies to such a road as the Tecumseh branch, but only to parallel roads, or those nearly so; it avers that the legislature could not grant powers so large and exclusive as those set up by the complainants; and that the Tecumseh branch, if built, would not, in fact or effect, together with the other railroads named, constitute one line of railroads, either to the eastern or southern boundary of the State, and the construction of the same would be no violation of the rights and privileges guarantied to the complainants by their charter, and that by their own charter they are not only authorized, but required, to construct said branch to Jackson.

The gravamen of the bill is, that the defendants are acting *without legislative authority*, and are usurping rights not granted to them by their charter. It nowhere asserts that they are acting under authority conferred on them by a legislative act which infringes the rights previously granted in the complainant's charter, or impairs the obligation of their contract. The answer puts in issue nothing but the construction of certain statutes which both parties admit to be valid. It is therefore abundantly apparent that this court has no jurisdiction to review the judgment of the supreme court of Michigan in this case.

A manuscript opinion of one of the judges of the supreme court of Michigan has been referred to by the counsel, in their argument in support of our jurisdiction. But even if this opinion had introduced some speculations on points not involved in the pleadings of the case, this court cannot resort to anything therein contained in order to support their jurisdiction. In the case of the Ocean Insurance Company v. Polleys, we have decided, "that it is to the record, and to the record alone, that this court can resort to ascertain its appellate jurisdiction under the twenty-fifth section of the judiciary act."

The writ of error must therefore be dismissed for want of jurisdiction.

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Ballard v. Thomas.

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ALBERT BALLARD and others, Plaintiffs in Error, v. PHILIP F. THOMAS.

19 H. 382.

VALUATION OF GOODS FOR DUTIES—INVOICE.

1. The statement in an invoice of goods that two and a half per cent. will be deducted for cash payment, will not authorize a corresponding deduction in the valuation on which duties shall be assessed.
2. The collector is right in assessing the invoice price of imported goods as the minimum valuation on which duties shall be assessed.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the district of Maryland.  
The case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Schley*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for defendant.

Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the circuit court of the United States for the district of Maryland.

The suit was brought in the court below by the plaintiffs against the defendant, collector of the port of Baltimore, to recover back an excess of duties paid under protest on an importation of iron.

The iron was shipped from Liverpool, and, on an appraisal at the custom house in Baltimore, the invoice price was adopted as the minimum market value upon which to assess the duties. The plaintiffs claimed that the iron ought to be appraised at the actual cash market value, or cash wholesale price, instead of the actual market value or wholesale price at a credit of four months, the usual time in the purchase of iron. But the collector insisted upon the invoice price as the minimum valuation. Two invoices are given in the record as specimens of those produced at the trial. One of them contains the price of the iron, with a deduction of two and a half per cent. for prompt payment, which means cash; the other adds at the foot, four months credit, which is the customary credit in the trade.

The court charged the jury, that it being admitted that the duties were levied on the prices at which the iron was charged in the invoices, they were lawfully exacted, and the plaintiffs not entitled to recover; and that the entry in the invoice, that the plaintiffs would be entitled to a deduction for prompt payment, could not affect the amount of duty chargeable.

The eighth section of the act of 1846 (9 U. S. St. p. 43) provides,

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“that under no circumstances shall the duty be assessed  
\* upon an amount less than the invoice value, any law of [ \* 383 ]  
congress to the contrary notwithstanding.”

It is claimed that this section has been repealed by the act of Congress of March 3, 1851, (9 St. U. S. p. 629,) which provides that the collector shall “cause the actual market value, or wholesale price thereof at the period of the exportation to the United States, in the principal markets of the country from which the same shall have been imported, &c., to be appraised, &c., and to such value or price shall be added all costs and charges, &c., as the true value at the port where the same may be entered,” &c.

Previous to this act, the time when the value of the article in the foreign market was to be ascertained, was the time of the purchase, (act 30th August, 1842, sec. 16, 5 St. U. S. p. 563;) now, by the act of 1851, the time of exportation. There is no change, however, in the rule which must govern in making the valuation—it is the actual market value or wholesale price in the principal markets of the country from which the article shall have been imported. The only real change, therefore, in respect to this matter, under the law of 1851, from that of 1842 and 1846, would seem to be a change of the time when the valuation is to take place, without intending to interfere with any other of the regulations in the former laws. This was the interpretation given by the department of the government having charge of this subject, soon after the passage of the act in question, and, we think, may be sustained upon the principles that this court has uniformly applied in interpreting these revenue laws.

The construction is also borne out by the case of *Stairs et al. v. Peaslee*, (18 How. 522.) That case recognizes the eighth section of the act of 1846 as in force since the act of 1851, and the clause in question is a part of it.

In respect to the deduction from the price on account of prompt payment, we think the fact does not vary or affect the price of the article, as stated in the invoice. It relates simply to the mode of payment, which may, if observed, operate as a satisfaction of the price to be paid by the acceptance of a less sum.

We think the ruling of the court below right, and that the judgment should be affirmed.



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Platt v. Jerome.

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OBADIAH H. PLATT, Plaintiff in Error, v. CHAUNCEY JEROME.

19 H. 384.

ATTORNEY'S LIEN—COMPROMISE BY CLIENT.

1. A party to a suit has authority to compromise or settle it without consent of his attorney.
2. A judgment for costs in the court below, on which an attorney has a lien for his fees, cannot prevent the parties from settling and dismissing it in this court.

WRIT of error to the circuit court for the southern district of New York.

Motion to reinstate a case heretofore dismissed by stipulation of the parties.

The matter is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Foster*, for the motion.

*Mr. Collamer*, opposed.

Mr. Justice NELSON delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a motion, on behalf of the attorney for the defendant in error, to restore the cause on the docket, which has been dismissed upon a stipulation of a settlement between the parties. The judgment was for the defendant, Jerome, in the court below, [ \* 385 ] for costs of suit, upon which the plaintiff took out \* a writ of error. The attorney claims that he had a lien on the judgment for his costs.

It is quite clear that he can have no lien for any costs in this court, as none have been recovered against the plaintiff in error. The suit is still pending; and as to the question of the dismissal of the writ, the court looks no further than to see that the application for the dismissal is made by the competent parties, which are usually the parties to the record. No doubt, if either party had assigned his interest to a third person, by which such third person had become possessed of the beneficial interest, and the party to the record merely nominal, the court would protect such interest, and give him the control of the suit. As in the present case, if the application had been made by the insolvent assignee of Jerome, and he had shown that he had succeeded to the interest of the insolvent, the court might protect his rights.

The attorney, however, even if he has a lien on the judgment, according to the course of proceedings in the court where it was recovered, stands in a different situation. He is not a party to the suit, nor does he stand in the place of the party in interest. He

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The United States v. City Bank of Columbus.

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is in no way responsible for the costs of the proceedings, and to permit him to control them would, in effect, be compelling the client to carry on the litigation at his own expense, simply for the contingent benefit of the attorney.

We think, therefore, that this cause has been dismissed from the docket by the competent parties, for aught that appears before us, and that the motion to restore it should be denied.

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THE UNITED STATES, Plaintiffs, v. THE CITY BANK OF COLUMBUS.

19 H. 385.

INSUFFICIENT CERTIFICATE OF DIVISION OF OPINION.

On a question certified to this court, on division of opinion, where the facts on which the answer must depend are not sufficiently stated in the record, the court will refuse to answer, and remand the case for further proceedings.

THE case came up on certificate of division of opinion between the judges of the circuit court for the southern district of Ohio.

The matter is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Cushing*, attorney general, for the United States.

*Mr. Stanbery*, for defendant.

\* Mr. Justice DANIEL delivered the opinion of the court. [ \* 386 ]

This cause is brought before us upon a certificate of a division of opinion between the judges of the circuit court of the United States for the southern district of Ohio.

The United States instituted their action of assumpsit against the defendants, for the recovery of a sum of money, laying their damages at two hundred thousand dollars.

The declaration consisted of two counts. The first was upon an alleged agreement between the United States and the City Bank of Columbus, whereby the latter, on the 1st day of November, 1850, contracted and undertook to transfer for the plaintiffs the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, the money of the plaintiffs, from the city of New York to the city of New Orleans, and to deposit the same at the latter place, in the treasury of the United States, by the 1st day of January, 1851, free of charge.

In this count, the receipt of the money by the bank, viz: one hundred thousand dollars, for the purposes stated, the failure to make the transfer and deposit in conformity with the agreement,

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The United States v. City Bank of Columbus.

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the conversion of the money so received by the bank to its own use, are all expressly averred.

The second count was the common *indebitatus assumpsit* for money had and received to the plaintiffs' use. Upon the trial before the jury of the issues joined by the parties, at the October term of the circuit court, in the year 1855, the plaintiffs, in order to establish the alleged agreement and undertaking on the part of the bank, gave in evidence the following papers, viz:

First. A letter from Thomas Moodie, cashier of the City Bank of Columbus, in these words:

“CITY BANK OF COLUMBUS,  
“COLUMBUS, OHIO, *October 26, 1850.*

“Hon. THOMAS CORWIN,

“*Secretary of the Treasury, Washington city.*

“SIR: The bearer, Col. William Miner, a director of this bank, is authorized, on behalf of this institution, to make proposals for the purchase of United States stocks to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars. Any arrangement he may make will be recognized and fully carried out by this bank. He is also authorized, if consistent with the rules of the treasury department, to contract on behalf of this institution for the transfer of money from the east to the south or west, for the government.

“I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

“THOMAS MOODIE, *Cashier.*”

[ \* 387 ] \* Second. The following contract:

“W. CITY, *November 1, 1850.*

“This will certify that I have contracted with the United States treasury, as the agent of the City Bank of Columbus, to transfer \$100,000 from New York to New Orleans, to be deposited in the treasury at the latter named city by the first day of January, 1851, free of charge. I have, in pursuance of said contract, this day received a draft in my own name for \$100,000 on the United States treasury at New York city, which is to be accounted for on said contract.

WILLIAM MINER.”

“Upon the production of these papers, and proof of their execution, and further proof that said letter was the act of said cashier alone, without the knowledge or sanction of the directory of said bank, before, at the time of, or subsequent thereto, but was copied in the letter book of the bank at the time of its execution, a question arose as to the validity thereof, upon which question the judges of this court were divided in opinion. It is therefore, by the re-

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quest of both the parties, hereby ordered, that the said question be certified to the supreme court of the United States—that is to say, ‘Do said papers, so made, constitute a valid contract between the parties to this suit?’ It was agreed that the defendant is an independent bank under the act of the general assembly of the State of Ohio of 1844–’5, to incorporate the State Bank of Ohio and other banking companies.

“ WEDNESDAY, *November 28*, 1855.

(Signed)

“ JOHN McLEAN. [Seal.]

“ H. H. LEAVITT. [Seal.]”

In considering this certificate of division, and the inquiry it propounds, an insuperable difficulty is perceived, arising from the partial and imperfect form in which the facts assumed as the foundation of the inquiry are presented, and from the obvious absence of facts and circumstances pertinent to the case, and by which, if disclosed, its complexion might be entirely controlled.

This court is asked to say, whether the above cited letter of the cashier of the City Bank of Columbus, written without the knowledge of the directory, though copied at the time of its date in the letter book of the bank, was a legal and valid act and authority.

Now, it must be obvious that the legality or validity of the letter of the cashier, and his authority to write that letter, do not depend solely and necessarily upon the fact of *knowledge* in \* the directory at the time of writing that letter, nor on [ \* 388 ] that of express direction or permission given at the time of its composition. The letter might have been legal and valid in the absence of either such knowledge or direction, or of both.

The powers of the cashier of a bank are such as are incident to, and implied in, his official character, as generally understood, as cash keeper, cash receiver, or payer, as negotiator and correspondent for the corporation, or as agent for various acts that are necessary and appropriate to the functions of such an officer, and inseparable from the operations of the bank; or those powers and duties may be created by a general or special authority declared in the charter or in the by-laws of the corporation. It would seem inconsistent with these considerations to determine upon an isolated fact or act of the cashier, not absolutely irreconcilable with the customary functions of such an officer, as being decisive of his capacities and duties; and this, irrespective of reference or inquiry as to the powers with which he might have been clothed, but, on the contrary, by cutting off all proofs as to the existence of any such powers, when by the introduction of those proofs the competency

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Burke v. Gaines.

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of such powers, or the recognition of them by the bank, might perhaps have been shown.

The true character of this cause seems not to have been developed before the circuit court, nor is it made apparent upon the certificate now before this court.

We think that all the evidence relevant to the acts and authority of the cashier, either inherent and exercised strictly *virtute officii*, or as an agent, general or special, of the bank, under either the authority of its charter or its by-laws, and proof, if any, of the ratification or rejection by the bank of this or of similar acts of the cashier, should have been fully brought out, to be passed upon by the jury under instructions from the court, or in the mode of a certificate of division, in the event of a disagreement between the judges. This court, therefore, refusing to respond upon the question, as propounded to them upon the certificate from the circuit court, remands this case to that court for trial.

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PATRICK BURKE, Plaintiff in Error, v. WILLIAM H. GAINES and Wife.

19 H. 388.

JURISDICTION ON ERROR TO STATE COURT.

Where plaintiff in error in ejectment claimed nothing under the authority of the laws of the United States, but objected to the validity of the claim set up by the other side, of settlement under acts of Congress, this court has no jurisdiction, because the judgment of the court *was in favor* of the authority so set up.

THIS was a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Arkansas.

The case is stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Lawrence*, for defendants in error.

No counsel for plaintiff in error.

[ \* 389 ] \* Mr. Chief Justice TANEY delivered the opinion of the court.

This is a writ of error to the supreme court of the State of Arkansas. A brief summary of the case will be sufficient to show that this court have no jurisdiction.

The defendants in error, who were the plaintiffs in the court below, brought their action of ejectment in the State court to recover certain premises described in the declaration.

By a statute of Arkansas, a party may maintain an ejectment upon an equitable title. And the defendants in error, in order to show such a title in themselves, offered in evidence certain documents tending to prove that a certain Ludovicus Belding had, by settlement in 1829, acquired a pre-emption right to the land in question, and that they are his heirs at law, and have paid to the proper officer the price fixed by the government.

The plaintiff in error offered no evidence of title in himself, although he was in possession of the land. And at the trial, the defendants in error asked the court to instruct the jury that the papers and documents read in evidence by them were sufficient to maintain the action, if the defendant in error was in possession of any part of the land at the commencement of the suit, and also that they were entitled to recover, by way of damages, reasonable rents and profits.

The plaintiff in error, on his part, asked the court to instruct the jury that the certificates and documents offered by the defendants in error were void, and conferred no title to the premises.

This is the substance of the instructions asked for by the respective parties, although drawn out at greater length, and shows the questions presented for the decision of the court. The court gave the instructions asked for by the defendants in error, and refused those requested by the plaintiff.

Under these instructions, the jury found a verdict in favor of the defendants in error, and a judgment was entered accordingly, which was afterwards affirmed by the supreme court of the State; and upon that judgment, this writ of error was brought.

\* It appears, therefore, that no right was claimed by the [ \* 390 ] plaintiff in error under any act of congress, or under any authority derived from the United States. He merely objected to the validity of the title claimed by the defendants in error. As the case appears on the record, he was a mere trespasser, holding possession in opposition to a title claimed under the United States. The decision of the State court in favor of the title thus claimed by the defendants in error can certainly give the plaintiff no right to bring this writ under the twenty-fifth section of the act of 1789. He claimed no right under the United States, and consequently can have no foundation for his writ of error.

The case cannot be distinguished from that of *Fulton and others v. McAfee*, (16 Pet. 149,) and the writ must be dismissed for want of jurisdiction.



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Bulkley v. Honold.

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GEORGE BULKLEY, Plaintiff in Error, v. CHRISTIAN HONOLD.

LATHROP L. STURGIS, Plaintiff in Error, v. SAME.

19 H. 390.

## LEX LOCI CONTRACTUS—UN SOUNDNESS IN A VESSEL SOLD.

1. In a contract for the sale of a vessel made and performed in Louisiana, the law of that State governs, though the vendee is a citizen of New York.
2. The code of Louisiana governs such a contract, and not any rule of admiralty law.
3. By that code the vendor is responsible for a secret defect in the vessel unknown to either vendor or vendee.
4. By the same law the vendee can either return the property and sue for the consideration, or retain the property and sue for damages.

THIS is a writ of error to the circuit court for the eastern district of Louisiana.

The case is fully stated in the opinion.

*Mr. Taylor*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mr. Benjamin*, for defendant.

[ \* 391 ] \* Mr. Justice CURTIS delivered the opinion of the court.

The defendant in error brought his action in the circuit court of the United States for the eastern district of Louisiana, founded on the allegations, that he purchased at New Orleans, of the plaintiff in error and others, a vessel called the *Ashland*, for the sum of \$27,500; that the vessel was then partly laden as a general ship for an outward foreign voyage, and it was agreed the purchaser should take on himself the expenses and advantages of that condition of the vessel; that, accordingly, the cargo was completed and the vessel went to sea, but was found to be unseaworthy, returned to New Orleans, the cargo was removed, and the hull examined and ascertained to be so decayed and rotten as to be of no value without very extensive and costly repairs. The court found these facts proved, and allowed to the plaintiff below damages equal to the difference between the price paid and the actual value of the vessel, adding the expenses of the vessel and cargo, incurred by the plaintiff below by reason of the sale.

The petition averred a fraudulent concealment by the vendors of the defects of the vessel, but the court found this not proved.

The law of Louisiana imposes on the seller the obligation of warranting the thing sold against its hidden defects. (Civ. Code, arts. 2,450, 2,451 ) Hidden defects are those which could not be discovered by simple inspection. (Civ. Code, art. 2,497.) In case the seller desires to rescind the contract by reason of the breach of

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Bulkley v. Honold.

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such a warranty, he may do so by an action of redhibition. But he may also retain the thing sold, and have an action for reduction of the price by reason of the difference in value between the thing as warranted and as it was in fact. (Civ. Code, arts. 2,519, 2,520.) And in this action only such a part of the price as will indemnify the vendee for the difference between the value of the thing as warranted and the thing actually sold, together with the expenses incurred on the thing, after deducting its fruits, can be recovered. (Civ. Code, arts. 2,522, 2,509.)

\* The circuit court appears to have strictly pursued these [ \* 392 ] rules in framing its judgment.

But it is insisted the defects were apparent, and not hidden defects. We do not think so. Certainly they were discoverable, but not on what the code terms simple inspection. It was necessary to strip or bore the vessel, to ascertain the state of its frame; and this, we think, the vendee was not bound to do under the law of Louisiana.

It is further argued that the implied warranty does not extend to the soundness of a vessel, because it is known to all, that, from the nature of the thing, it must decay, and the purchaser may be considered as knowing this, and making allowance therefor in the price. It is true that vessels must, after some time, decay; and it is also true that most subjects of sale must at some time become of less or of no value. But it is not true that vessels exposed to sale are generally unsound and unseaworthy. The buyer has no notice, from the nature of the article, that any particular vessel offered to be sold is unseaworthy by reason of the decayed state of that part of its frame which is concealed from sight. We do not perceive, therefore, why any different rule should be applicable to vessels, from that applied to most other subjects of sale. (See *De Armas v. Gray et al.*, 10 Louis. R. 575.)

Another objection is, that the plaintiff below did not offer to restore the vessel. But this proceeds on a misapprehension of the nature of the remedy. In an action of redhibition, such an offer would be necessary. Here, the contract is to stand unrescinded, and the buyer retains the thing, the price only being lessened as much as is necessary to do justice.

It was also argued that this contract was not to be governed by the laws of Louisiana, but by the laws of New York, where the vendors resided. But the contract was made and performed in Louisiana, and must be governed by its laws. (*Boyle v. Zacharie*, 6 Peters, 635; *Cox v. United States*, 6 Peters, 172; *Bell v. Bruin*, 1 How. 169.)

Bulkley v. Honold.

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The counsel for the plaintiff in error also urged, that if the law of Louisiana ought to govern the contract, that law was to be found, not in the civil code of that State, but in the general commercial law of the country. Without pausing upon the difficulties which otherwise might attend this proposition, we think it sufficient to say, that we find the subject of sales, with the obligations which attend them, regulated by the civil code of Louisiana, and we see no sound reason why sales of vessels are not within those laws.

The judgment of the circuit court is affirmed.

# INDEX.

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## ADMINISTRATORS.

1. Administrators in different States are independent of each other. Each has jurisdiction alone, coextensive with the State in which it is granted, over assets within its limits. *McLean and Bass v. Meek*, 15.
2. A judgment establishing a debt against the estate in a suit against one of these administrators is not evidence against the other in the other State; nor does it operate to prevent the bar of the statute of limitations in the latter. *Stacy v. Thrasher*, 6 How. 44. *Ib.*
3. A purchase of real estate from an administrator, and possession for over twenty years, sustains a plea of the statute of limitations concerning real estate in Missouri, in the absence of any special circumstance to except it from the bar. *Long v. O'Fallon*, 598.
4. The administrator, having received from a debtor of the estate a mortgage to secure the debt, and after forfeiture a release of the equity of redemption, can convey a valid title to a *bona fide* purchaser, and the latter is not bound to see to the application of the purchase money. *Ib.*
5. The heirs of the decedent may go upon the administrator or his sureties for a *devastavit*, if he has failed to account for the purchase money; but they cannot recover the land. *Ib.*
6. The same rule applies where the administrator had entered land and received a patent from the United States, as part of the same transaction securing the debt, the patent being in his own name, and the purchaser receiving a deed from him for which he paid value. *Ib.*

INDIANS, 3, 4; STATUTES OF STATES, 15.

## ADMIRALTY.

### ———BOTTOMRY.

1. A bottomry bond made for a larger amount than the sum actually advanced, and maritime interest, though only intended to defraud the underwriters, and known to the owner, cannot be enforced as a bottomry lien on the vessel. *The Brig Ann C. Pratt*, 52.
2. Nor can it be enforced for what was actually advanced. It is absolutely void. *Ib.*
3. Nor can the payee on the bond resort to his maritime lien for supplies or advances under such circumstances. *Ib.*
4. The case of intentional fraud distinguished from those in which sums were included in the bond not proper to a bottomry hypothecation, or so included by mistake, where it may stand good for the amount justly due. *Ib.*

### ———COLLISION.

1. It is satisfactory evidence of gross carelessness, that a large steamer is proved to have proceeded down Long Island Sound, in the direct track of the coasting trade, at the rate of sixteen miles an hour, of a foggy morning; and she must be held responsible

- for damages to a sailing vessel at anchor, run down by her under such circumstances. *The Bay State*, 74.
2. There was not sufficient evidence in this case to establish a uniform usage for vessels lying at anchor in a fog to blow a fog-horn, and the vessel is not at fault for omitting this, as well as beating empty barrels to make a noise. *Ib.*
  3. A steamboat descending the Hudson river in the night, in the harbor of New York, at the rate of eight miles an hour, with many barges in tow, at a point where the river is filled with sail vessels, is guilty of gross carelessness, and is responsible for the resulting injury to such sailing vessel. *The Steamboat New York*, 181.
  4. There is also neglect and want of care, if there is no other watch on the steamboat than the master, who is at the time engaged in the general care of the vessel and her tow. *Ib.*
  5. The statute of the State of New York, requiring vessels lying in the harbor to have a light suspended in the rigging twenty feet above the deck, does not control the courts of the United States in admiralty cases, as deciding on the fault of the vessel, if she had such light as the general rules of admiralty require. There are exceptions to this rule stated in the opinion. *Ib.*
  6. The rule for vessels passing each other on the Mississippi river, as shown by the evidence, is for the descending boat to keep near the middle of the river, and the ascending boat near the right bank. *The Magnolia*, 390.
  7. A vessel which suffers by a collision due to the violation of this rule is in default, and her owners cannot recover. *Ib.*
  8. A want of a sufficient watch, and an unjustifiable rate of speed in crossing the track of the other vessel, are additional faults. *Ib.*
  9. It is a rule of this court that, when a steamer approaches a sailing vessel, the latter should keep steadily on her course, and the former is required to keep out of the way. 10 How. 557. *The Steamer Oregon*, 490.
  10. The rule of the Trinity masters is also adopted by this court, that where two vessels on opposite tacks are approaching each other, each should go to the right, passing the other on the larboard side. *Ib.*
  11. These rules being established, every deviation from them should be chargeable as a fault, that there may be no uncertainty in the course to be pursued in the presence of a threatened collision. *Ib.*
  12. While it is a rule that a sail vessel approaching a steamer should steadily keep her course, she is not bound to do this where that will make collision inevitable. She may, when the danger is otherwise inevitable, change her course to avoid it. *The Steamboat Isaac Newton*, 499.
  13. A sailing vessel, however, cannot be put in the wrong for obeying the general rule, without a very strong case for a different course. *Ib.*
  14. A steamer held in fault for running to her dock in the harbor of New York, through an opening of three hundred feet between vessels, without making sure that no other vessel was in the way, when a reasonable exercise of care would have shown her there was. *Ib.*
  15. Where, by an ordinance of a city, or by general usage, a locality for flat boat and a different one for steamboat landings on the bank of a river are designated, vessels are bound to conform their action to this designation. *The Steamer Southern Belle*, 502.
  16. A steamboat approaching such a landing, especially if the wind is high, is bound to use more than ordinary care, because there is always great danger under such circumstances. *Ib.*
  17. Hence, where a flat-boat is fast to the bank at a place designated for such boats, a steamer, which might have seen and avoided her by great care and vigilance, is liable for the damage from a collision on her landing at that point. *Ib.*
  18. The general doctrine reaffirmed that it is the duty of steamboats to avoid other vessels, especially flat-boats moored to the bank of the river. *The Steamboat Gipsy*, 565.

19. And though the night be foggy and by no means clear, and the flat-boat had no light, yet, as she lay at a place where flat-boats might be expected, and the steam-boat had no occasion to go so near the shore, the latter is liable for the damages resulting from the collision. *Ib.*
20. A sail vessel lying at anchor should exhibit a light; and it is no excuse for not showing one at the time it was needed, that it had been taken down only for a few minutes to be cleaned. The schooner was in fault. *The Steamer St. Charles*, 592.
21. A steamer is also in fault for going at the rate of ten miles an hour of a dark night in Lake Borgne, when she ought to know that she is in the track of other vessels, and in a neighborhood where sailing vessels are accustomed to anchor in dark or stormy nights. *Ib.*
22. It is no sufficient legal excuse that the steamer carries the mail and is bound to make definite time in its delivery. *Ib.*
23. In such cases the damages resulting from collision must be equally divided. *Ib.*
24. Neither rain, nor the darkness of the night, nor the absence of a light from a barge or sailing vessel, nor the fact that the steamer was well manned and furnished, and conducted with caution, will excuse the steamer for coming in collision with the barge or sailing vessel, where the latter is at anchor, or sailing in a thoroughfare, out of the usual track of the steam vessel. *The Steamer Roanoke*, 666.

——MARITIME LIEN.

1. The vessel is bound to the shipper and to his consignee or assignee of the bill of lading for the performance of the contract of affreightment, and the bill of lading given for goods thus shipped binds the general owner of the vessel as well as the special owner. *The Schooner Freeman*, 155.
2. This rule is founded upon the principle that, when the general owner parts with the control of his vessel to a charterer or other special owner, he expects it to be used for carrying cargo, and knows that the master must have a right to make such contracts on that subject as will bind the vessel. *Ib.*
3. But if no cargo is received, there is nothing for which a lien exists, though the master may have given a false bill of lading. *Ib.*
4. And neither the general owner of the vessel nor his interest in it is bound by fraudulent and false bills of lading, where no goods were received, though the master signed the bills under instructions from the special owner, to enable him to negotiate them by fraud. *Ib.*
5. Nor can the innocent consignee and holder of such false bills, though he have in good faith advanced money on them, hold the vessel liable, at the expense of the general owner in such case. *Ib.*
6. By the laws of England, the master of a vessel is not authorized to create a lien on her for supplies and repairs obtained in a foreign port, except by bottomry bond. *The Bark Laura, Thomas v. Osborn*, 532.
7. But such was not the ancient law of maritime nations; and the courts of the United States have adopted the general law of the seas on this subject. *Ib.*
8. But the master cannot create such a lien except for supplies and repairs, and unless there exists a necessity that the ship's credit should be pledged for them. *Ib.*
9. And it is also a part of the law on this subject, that the furnisher of supplies, or the lender of the money with which they are bought, should see to it that there is an apparent necessity, and that what is lent or furnished is for the use of the vessel. But see the *Grapeshot*, 9 Wallace, 129. *Ib.*
10. The numerous facts of long voyages at distant ports by a master controlling the vessel under "a lay" examined, and the conclusion arrived at that there was no necessity for a lien on the vessel for the supplies furnished, and that the party furnishing them had such dealings with the master in other matters that they must have known that he had the means, and that it was his duty to have paid for the repairs and supplies on which the libel is founded. *Ib.*



11. A contract between the owners of different vessels to form a line to carry passengers and cargo, meeting at a given point of the line to exchange, and fixing the proportion of the freight to be received by each party, is not a maritime contract, and the remedy for a breach of it is at common law. *The Yankee Blade*, 583.
12. The doctrine of mutual obligation and mutual lien, as between the cargo and the vessel, can have no place until a cargo is on board the vessel. *Ib.*
13. No contract for the future employment of the vessel creates any lien upon it for the performance of such a contract. *Ib.*
14. Where a cargo has been lawfully jettisoned to save the vessel, the owner of the cargo has a maritime lien on the vessel for its contributory share of the general average compensation. *The Ann Elizabeth*, 619.
15. This lien may be enforced by a proper proceeding *in rem* against the vessel and the residue of the cargo, if it has not been delivered. *Ib.*
16. In order to establish a maritime lien for supplies furnished, the burden of proof is on the libellant to establish not only the necessity for the supplies, but the necessity that the credit of the vessel should be relied on for payment. But see *The Grapeshot*, 9 Wallace, 129. *The Sultana*, *Pratt v. Reed*, 756.

——MASTER'S POWER TO SELL—SALVAGE.

1. It is undoubtedly true that a master has the right, under extraordinary circumstances, to sell the vessel and the cargo; but the circumstances under which the sale is made are always open to a rigid scrutiny. *Post v. Jones*, 613.
2. In all cases where such sale has been held valid, there is implied a market for the article sold, a chance for competition, and money to pay for the thing sold. Hence a sale on a bleak coast of Behring's Straits, with no competition, and no money actually paid, the purchasers bidding a nominal price instead of becoming salvors, is void. *Ib.*
3. But as the vessel and cargo were derelict, and lost but for the aid of the salvors, they shall be allowed reasonable salvage. *Ib.*
4. Under the circumstances of this case a moiety of the cargo saved is a fair allowance for salvage, and freight should be allowed on the other moiety from Behring's Straits to New York. *Ib.*
5. It being conceded that the sale of a vessel by the master was not authorized by the circumstances in which he was placed, the sale is not confirmed or ratified by the act of the owners in abandoning the vessel to the underwriters in the same circumstances. *The Bark Mopang*, 222.

——MORTGAGE.

1. This court reasserts the doctrine that the circuit court, sitting as an admiralty court, has no jurisdiction to foreclose or give other remedy on a mortgage. 17 Howard, 399; 21 Curtis, 572. *Schuchardt v. Babbidge*, 664.
2. A libel in the circuit court against the proceeds of a vessel sold under an admiralty decree, to subject the proceeds to the satisfaction of a mortgage on the vessel, cannot be sustained. *Ib.*
3. A petition filed in that suit on a claim for remnants might give such relief as admiralty could give in the premises. *Ib.*

——PLEADING.

1. Where a libel of information charges the offense in the language of the statute, it is sufficient. *The Neurea*, 586.
2. Therefore, when the charge is for carrying a number of passengers beyond that allowed by statute, it is not necessary to say on which deck of the vessel they were carried. *Ib.*
3. The rules of pleading in admiralty are simple, and free from technicalities; therefore, though the libel be for a failure to deliver the cargo, if the defense set up shows

a jettison for which the vessel is liable to contribution on general average to the libellants, the court may decree in favor of libellants on such pleadings the amount so due. There is no such thing as a technical variance in admiralty practice. *The Ann Elizabeth*, 619.

———PRIZE.

1. The rule is inflexible that trade between citizens or subjects of nations at war is forbidden, and property captured on the high seas intended for an enemy's port is lawful prize. *Jecker v. Montgomery*, 94.
2. Nor can this forfeiture be evaded by stopping at an intermediate port. *Ib.*
3. While it is the duty of a captor to send his prize into a port of his own nation for adjudication, there are circumstances which will excuse this, and authorize a court to proceed to adjudicate and condemn, without possession of the vessel or property seized as prize. *Ib.*
4. That the captor was in command of a squadron at a great distance from his own country, and could not have spared a prize crew and officer without improperly weakening his force, is sufficient cause. *Ib.*
5. Under such circumstances the capturing commander must of necessity be the judge of the circumstances which justify his failure to send in his prize; and while his decision is not conclusive on the court, it will inquire whether he has exercised reasonable judgment and discretion in the matter. *Ib.*
6. While it is certainly the rule in prize cases that proceedings should be conducted in the name of the United States, the decree will not be reversed when they have been conducted in the name of the captors, through the course of a long litigation, without objection on that score until the case is argued in this court. *Ib.*

———SEAWORTHINESS.

Consideration of what constitutes seaworthiness in a vessel. Capacity to resist ordinary action of the sea during the voyage, without loss or damage to the cargo. *The Ann Elizabeth*, 619.

———SOURCES OF JURISDICTION.

This court does not follow the admiralty courts of England, between the Restoration and the statute 3 and 4 Victoria, c. 65, § 4, in declining jurisdiction in petitory actions for vessels, but asserts the authority of the court as practiced before that period over that question. *The Bark Mopang*, 222.

AGENCY.

1. Agents who are brokers, making a contract in their names for their principals, in which they have an interest, may sustain an action in their own name. *McCullough v. Roots*, 746.
2. Purchasers from such agents cannot refuse to pay, on the ground that there is a warehouse receipt for the property outstanding in possession of a third person. *Ib.*
3. Special circumstances of this case considered. *Ib.*

INDIANS, 4.

ARBITRATION.

1. An award of an arbitrator is good only for what is submitted to him; and if he mingles in a single conclusion, so that it cannot be separated, what was submitted and what was not, the whole is bad. *York and Cumberland R. R. Co. v. Myers*, 203.
2. The bill of exceptions in this case, giving the testimony of the arbitrator, shows that his entire award was within the submission, which was of all matters embraced in the declaration. *Ib.*
3. The facts being thus presented to this court by the bill of exceptions, it can examine to see if the court ruled correctly on the validity of the award; and it being found

to be within the submission, the court cannot set it aside for mistake either of law or fact. *Ib.*

#### APPEALS AND APPEAL BONDS.

1. A bond approved and filed after ten days from the date of judgment or decree is sufficient to sustain the appeal or writ of error, though it may not supersede the execution. *Hudgins v. Kemp*, 454.
2. An appeal may be allowed by a judge in vacation or by the court in term. The only difference in the effect of such allowance is, that notice will be presumed in the latter case, but a citation must be served in the former case. *Ib.*
3. The allowance of an appeal need not be a matter of record in the court below. The knowledge of the clerk that such an appeal was actually allowed in open court is sufficient to justify him in certifying it to this court. The party cannot be divested of his right by the failure of the clerk to make the proper entry of the allowance on his record book. *Ib.*
4. An appeal bond may be approved by the judge in vacation as well as in court. *Ib.*

EQUITY, 1.

#### ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.

1. It is not unlawful for an attorney to purchase of his client the subject of the litigation after a final judgment in the case. *McMicken v. Perin*, 433.
2. If it were, a party who loans the money to him to make the purchase, and in whose name the purchase is made, cannot rely on it to defeat the trust in his hands for the benefit of the attorney. *Brooks v. Martin*, 2 Wallace, 70. *Ib.*
3. Where plaintiffs residing in New York recovered a decree in Alabama, in which the money was paid into court, their counsel, in procuring the decree, cannot, by a mere *ex parte* order of the court, have a long account for legal services in other cases, settled before a master, and a decree for its payment out of the fund in court. *Wolfe v. Lewis*, 683.
4. Such a proceeding is void for want of parties or of process, and is altogether irregular and indefensible, and the order is reversed by this court. *Ib.*
5. A party to a suit has authority to compromise or settle it without consent of his attorney. *Platt v. Jerome*, 780.
6. A judgment for costs in the court below, on which an attorney has a lien for his fees, cannot prevent the parties from settling and dismissing it in this court. *Ib.*

EQUITY, 29; JURISDICTION OF SUPREME COURT, 11, 12.

#### ATTACHMENT AND GARNISHEE PROCESS.

1. Where the person garnished admits a surplus in his hands, after a sale under a trust deed, and satisfaction of the trust, if he claims to hold it for a debt of his own against the judgment debtor, he must establish the justice of his claim. *Williams v. Hill*, 667.
2. Where issue is taken on an answer to a garnishee process, which sets up such a claim, it is a question for the jury to decide, whether the claim is just and fair, or fraudulent, and no presumptions arise in favor of the garnishee. *Ib.*

EQUITY, 6.

#### BANKRUPTCY.

##### —EFFECT OF DISCHARGE.

1. Where a person mortgaged land on which there was a prior judgment lien, the use of the words, "grant, bargain, and sell," by the law of Mississippi, created a covenant against the encumbrance of that judgment. *Bush v. Person*, 67.
2. His subsequent discharge under the bankrupt law of 1841, while it released him from the personal liability on the debt or covenant of the mortgage, did not destroy the covenant, as one attached to and running with the property. *Ib.*

3. So that when, after his discharge in bankruptcy, he purchased the property at a sale under the prior judgment, he was estopped to set this up as a superior title to the mortgage, in which was the implied covenant of warranty against that judgment. *Ib.*

#### CALIFORNIA LAND GRANTS.

1. A native of the United States, naturalized as a citizen of Mexico, did not forfeit his right, under a grant from Mexico, by joining the forces of the United States in the war by which we took possession of California, nor did that fact amount to an abandonment of the land. *United States v. Reading*, 1.
2. Failure to obtain juridical possession, have the land surveyed, and build a house on it, which are conditions of the grant, do not forfeit it when sufficient reasons are given for non-performance. *Ib.*
3. The approval of the departmental assembly, though necessary to a perfect grant, is not absolutely essential to a confirmation under the act of congress of March 3, 1851. The failure of the governor to report the case to the assembly for its approval does not destroy the grantee's rights absolutely. *Ib.*
4. Two orders or decrees being produced in support of a grant by the Mexican government, dated respectively 26th and 27th November, 1835, the first of which announces the approval of the claim, and the second purports to be a regular concession or title: Held, that the latter, which is more definite in describing the boundaries of the grant, shall govern in that respect. *Arguello v. United States*, 460.
5. Other evidence of a more extended grant by a subsequent governor considered, and held insufficient. *Ib.*
6. The Mexican laws for granting lands made a clear distinction between grants to empresarios, who agreed to introduce and settle foreigners as colonists, and the distribution of lands to Mexican citizens, families or single persons. The prohibition of grants within the ten littoral leagues applied to the former, and did not apply to the latter. *Ib.*
7. This court reaffirms the doctrine of *United States v. Reading*, 18 H. 1, ante 1, that it is the duty of the governor, and not the claimants, to present the claim to the departmental assembly. *United States v. Cervantes*, 474.
8. The case affords a presumption that it was approved by that body. *Ib.*
9. A grant to a citizen of Mexico within the ten littoral leagues was valid by the Mexican laws. *Ib.*
10. The lands once held by missions, may, when abandoned, be granted as other lands. Their assent also will make a grant valid. *Ib.*
11. Claimants' original grant was for a definite quantity, and three sides of the boundaries were given. It interfered with other claims, and a new grant was made, with a condition that a survey, with a map of its relations to other claims, should be made and filed. This was a condition subsequent, and the disturbed condition of the country afforded sufficient excuse for not making the survey. *United States v. Vaca*, 476.
12. Where the petition did not mention the quantity, a resort can be had to the concession or titulo; and if three sides and the quantity are given, the grant is sufficiently definite. *United States v. Larkin*, 478.
13. The absence of the approval of the departmental assembly is not necessarily fatal, nor will the absence from the grant of a condition of permanent settlement avoid it. *Ib.*
14. Objections to the fraudulent character of the claim, made in this court for the first time, will not be considered. *Ib.*
15. Under the statutes of California of March 26, 1851, and March 26, 1852, concerning city lots of San Francisco, the defendants bring themselves in this case within their requirements, and plaintiffs do not. The facts considered. *Field v. Seabury*, 721.
16. Where claimant produces record evidence of his title, and the only question is of the authority of the Mexican officers to make the grant, the *prima facie* presumption will be in favor of the power. The power of the Mexican territorial governors to grant land considered. *United States v. Peralta*, 741.

17. The record and the contemporary parol testimony in this case combine to show that appellee's claim of boundary is just. *Ib.*
18. The small value attached to land in California by the Mexican government, and its almost exclusive use for pasturage and stockraising, considered in construing the validity of grants as to quantity. *United States v. Sutherland*, 759.
19. The want of surveying instruments, and the above consideration, affect also the question of precision in description of boundaries in such grant. *Ib.*
20. Therefore, that a grant is of eleven leagues in quantity is no sufficient objection to it; and, if the *diseno*, or imperfect map, with other description accompanying the *expediente*, will enable the surveyor to locate it, these are sufficient. *Ib.*

#### CONSTITUTIONAL LAW.

1. The act of May 15, 1820, which authorized the solicitor of the treasury to issue a warrant of distress against the property of a revenue officer, for the amount found due on adjusting his accounts in the treasury department, is constitutional. *Murray v. Hoboken Co.*, 227.
2. Though partaking of the nature of judicial power in some respects, it is a power long exercised by the executive department in England and in the States, and is not prohibited by the division of executive and judicial power in the federal constitution. *Ib.*
3. That congress may, by consent, authorize the defendant to bring the case, after levy, into a court for judicial investigation, is not a valid argument against this proposition. *Ib.*
4. Such a proceeding is due process of law within the meaning of the fifth amendment to the constitution. What is meant by due process of law elaborately discussed. *Ib.*
5. It is due process of law, because it is the usual and appropriate mode by which the English government, from whose *Magna Charta* the phrase is derived, has always used it or its equivalent in enforcing from debtors the amounts due the government on account of its revenues.
6. As it is not a search warrant, it is not within the provision of the constitution requiring affidavits to make such warrants valid. *Ib.*
7. The constitution confers on the president the power to "grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment." *Ex parte Wells*, 260.
8. In order to ascertain clearly what is meant by this grant of power, recourse must be had to the use of the power, and the meaning of those words as exercised in England under the common law. The court goes into an elaborate examination of the English precedents and authorities. *Ib.*
9. It includes the right to commute the sentence of the court by substituting a milder punishment, as imprisonment for death; and acceptance of such a pardon binds the convict as to the substituted punishment. *Ib.*
10. A provision in the charter of a banking corporation, fixing the rate of taxation on the bank by the State which charters it, is a contract, and a subsequent statute increasing the rate of taxation on the bank is void, as impairing the obligation of that contract. *Dodge v. Woolsey*, 284.
11. This principle is not varied by the fact that the subsequent statute increasing the tax was authorized by a new constitution of the State, adopted by the people after the charter was granted. *Ib.*
12. Where a corporation is permitted by the statute of another State to do business therein, the latter State has a right to impose, as a condition of this privilege, that it shall be suable by service of process on its agent within the State. *The Lafayette Ins. Co. v. French*, 340.
13. A judgment obtained by such service is, under the constitution and acts of congress, entitled to the same faith and credit in any other State as it has by law and usage in the State where it was rendered. *Ib.*

14. The majority of the court in this case, as reported in 13 How. 518; 19 Curtis, 621; held that the erection of the bridge, so far as it interfered with the free and unobstructed navigation of the Ohio river, was inconsistent with and a violation of acts of congress, and was not protected by the legislation of Virginia, because that statute was in conflict with the acts of congress. *State of Pennsylvania v. Wheeling Bridge Co.*, 355.
15. The court was also of opinion that, under the power vested in congress to regulate commerce among the States, its legislation on the subject was valid. *Ib.*
16. And the court is of opinion that the power to regulate commerce includes the authority to license and authorize the erection of bridges across navigable streams, and to prescribe their height, location, and other circumstances affecting their relation to navigation. *Ib.*
17. In declaring by statute, therefore, that the bridge, as it stood when the decree in this case was rendered, in 1852, was a lawful structure, anything in the laws of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding, congress acted upon a subject within its power and control. *Ib.*
18. The effect of this statute was not to declare void the decree of the court already rendered. It did not affect the fact that, at the time the decree was rendered, this bridge was a nuisance, and by the law then in force ought to be abated. *Ib.*
19. Nor could it, nor did it, affect the right of plaintiff to the costs recovered in that suit, nor, if damages had been recovered, would they have been released. *Ib.*
20. But that which, by the law as it stood, was liable to be removed as a nuisance, is now by law no longer a nuisance. The foundation on which that part of the decree was based is gone; and as this is effected by a lawful exercise of the power of congress, the decree can no further be executed. *Ib.*
21. Nor is the act of congress liable to the objection that it gives a preference to the ports of one State over those of another. *Ib.*
22. Nor is it void as being in conflict with the compact between the States of Virginia and Kentucky. No such compact between States can impose a restriction on the power granted congress by the constitution. *Ib.*
23. The clause of the constitution of the United States which declares that "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens of the several States," applies only to such privileges and immunities as grow out of citizenship. *Connor v. Elliott*, 508.
24. The rights of a community of acquets between married persons, which the law of Louisiana attaches to the contract of marriage within that State, when the parties are married there, or reside there when the acquets are made, are not privileges and immunities of citizenship, but attach to the contract or relation of marriage without reference to the citizenship or alienage of the parties. *Ib.*
25. Hence a widow, married and domiciled during her married life in the State of Mississippi, is not entitled by the laws of Louisiana, nor by the above provision of the federal constitution, to a community in her husband's acquets, though these are made and located within Louisiana, and administered in her courts, and though the wife was a native-born citizen of Louisiana. *Ib.*
26. This court will not undertake the difficult and delicate task of giving a general or comprehensive definition of the rights and privileges guaranteed by the above clause of the constitution, because it is deemed safer and more in accord with judicial propriety to leave its meaning to be determined in each case as it shall arise. *Ib.*

## CONTRACT.

### —COMMUNIST RECEIPT.

1. Plaintiff, who was a member of the communist "Harmony Society," withdrew, and sued for a share of the common property. *Baker v. Nachtrieb*, 601.
2. The laws of the association concerning property cited and considered. One of these



allows the association, in its discretion, to make a donation to a member voluntarily withdrawing. *Ib.*

3. A receipt given by plaintiff, stating his withdrawal, and acknowledging the receipt of two hundred dollars as a donation, agreeably to the above contract, is not only a receipt, but a contract of dissolution, expressing the terms on which it was made. *Ib.*
4. As there is nothing in the bill assailing its fairness, or impeaching it in any way, it is conclusive against the plaintiff's right to relief in the present case. *Ib.*

———CONSTRUCTION OF.

1. The case turns upon the construction of a contract for continuous delivery of guano by defendants to plaintiffs; the agreement evidenced by correspondence. This court, agreeing with the circuit courts, holds that, in the light of this correspondence, defendants were not bound to deliver a cargo of guano consigned to plaintiffs, while there was an indebtedness of \$40,000, without payment or security for the cargo so consigned. *Masters v. Barreda*, 415.
2. By the contract sued on the plaintiff agreed to complete certain work by the 1st of December, and the defendant agreed, when the work was completed, to give his notes for \$10,000, payable six months thereafter: Held, that the completion of the work at the time specified was a condition precedent to the right to the notes. *Slater v. Emerson*, 658.
3. Parol evidence of the necessity of completion of the work at the time, held to have weight in determining whether the covenants were dependent or independent. *Ib.*
4. A bill of lading which exempted the owner of the vessel (a steamboat) from perils or dangers of the river, does not exonerate him from loss by fire. *Garrison v. Memphis Ins. Co.*, 711.
5. If the bill excepts "dangers of the river" and "unavoidable accidents," he is not responsible for loss by fire, where no fault is shown. *Ib.*

ADMIRALTY, MARITIME LIEN, 11; CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, 10, 11; COPYRIGHT, 2; PATENT LAW, 1, 12, 13; STATUTES OF STATES, 7, 8.

COPYRIGHT.

1. Under the statute of New York, in virtue of which Comstock was appointed reporter of the decisions of the court of appeals, no copyright could be had in the reports. *Little v. Hall*, 143.
2. The contract of the reporter with a publishing house for the exclusive right to publish for his five years of office, did not confer on them any right to the manuscripts prepared by him for such reports; and no injunction could be issued by a federal court by virtue of the copyright acts of congress to prevent others from publishing them. *Ib.*
3. If plaintiffs have any remedy, it is by a personal action against Comstock on the contract. *Ib.*

COURT AND JURY.

1. What is color of title is matter of law to be decided by the court. What is good faith in making claim under such title is a matter of fact for the jury. *Wright v. Mattison*, 40.
2. A tax title not fatally defective on its face may be color of title, to be determined by the court in connection with the facts. *Ib.*
3. It is not a necessary inference of law that a person in possession of land, claiming title, who permits it to be sold for taxes, cannot acquire, in good faith, a color of title by purchasing at such sale. The title may be sufficient to give color, and the jury must be left to decide on the good faith of the transaction. *Ib.*
4. The court may instruct a jury that there is not sufficient evidence to authorize them to find for plaintiff; but this can only be done when in fact there is no evidence to sustain plaintiff's claim. *Richardson v. The City of Boston*, 675.

5. It should be left to the jury to determine the locality, lines, corners, low-water mark, &c., referred to in a written document at the time it was made; also whether the effect of certain drains is to injure the property of plaintiff. *Ib.*

ATTACHMENT, 2; EVIDENCE, 4; MISSOURI LAND TITLES, 9; NEGOTIABLE PAPER, 4.

#### CUSTOMS DUTIES.

1. Under the tariff act of 1846, where goods were imported from countries other than that of their production or manufacture, their dutiable value was to be determined by that of the principal markets of the country from which they were imported into the United States. *Stairs v. Peaslee*, 447.
2. The word country here includes all of the dominions of a state like Great Britain; and the decisions of the appraiser, that the principal markets of that country for a particular class of goods are London and Liverpool, are valid, though the importation was directly from Halifax. *Ib.*
3. Where, on such appraisement legally made, it appears that the value was more than ten per cent. above the value at which they were entered by the importer, the penalty of twenty per cent. upon the value attaches, whether they are entered at the invoice value, or at a greater or less value than stated by the importer. *Ib.*
4. The tariff act of 1846 required the collector to designate on the invoice at least one package of every invoice, and one package at least of every ten of goods, should he or the appraisers deem it necessary, to be opened and examined by the appraisers. This was not done in this case. *Converse v. Burgess*, 348.
5. Proof was admissible, in an action to recover back the duties as improperly assessed, that the appraisers did not examine or see any of the original packages, but only samples, (of sugars,) which had been taken out several weeks before, and which could not afford a true criterion of their value. *Ib.*
6. A protest on the ground that the goods were not fairly and faithfully examined by the appraisers is sufficient to permit this evidence. *Ib.*
7. While it may be conceded that the judgment of the appraisers is conclusive, if made upon a sufficient examination, the proof of failure to examine one in ten, or indeed any of the packages, as the law requires, destroys the conclusiveness of their appraisement. *Ib.*
8. The statement in an invoice of goods that two and a half per cent. will be deducted for cash payment, will not authorize a corresponding deduction in the valuation on which duties shall be assessed. *Ballard v. Thomas*, 778.
9. The collector is right in assessing the invoice price of imported goods as the minimum valuation on which duties shall be assessed. *Ib.*

#### EQUITY.

1. From a decree against G. for \$10,552, with an order to sell land in satisfaction of it, G. appealed, and plaintiffs were his sureties on an appeal bond. The decree was affirmed, and the land sold for \$3,025, leaving unpaid of the decree and interest, \$7,525. Plaintiffs claim that the sum realized on the sale of land should be applied *pro rata* on the original decree and the penalty of the bond, which was \$12,000. Held by the court that they were not entitled to such apportionment, but were bound for all the amount of the original decree, interest and costs, not paid by the sale of the land, if that sum did not exceed the penalty of their bond. *Sessions v. Pintard*, 90.
2. Under the authority conferred by the deed of trust in this case, the trustee was authorized to sell for an installment of interest due and unpaid, though the principal sum was not due. *Richards v. Holmes*, 125.
3. And this is so, though the deed did not show that any interest was due before the note became due, the note being referred to in the deed. *Ib.*
4. An authority to sell, after advertising the time and place of sale, authorizes the trustee, in the exercise of a sound discretion, to postpone the sale more than once, if due notice is given of the postponement. *Ib.*

allows the association, in its discretion, to make a donation to a member voluntarily withdrawing. *Ib.*

3. A receipt given by plaintiff, stating his withdrawal, and acknowledging the receipt of two hundred dollars as a donation, agreeably to the above contract, is not only a receipt, but a contract of dissolution, expressing the terms on which it was made. *Ib.*
4. As there is nothing in the bill assailing its fairness, or impeaching it in any way, it is conclusive against the plaintiff's right to relief in the present case. *Ib.*

———CONSTRUCTION OF.

1. The case turns upon the construction of a contract for continuous delivery of guano by defendants to plaintiffs; the agreement evidenced by correspondence. This court, agreeing with the circuit courts, holds that, in the light of this correspondence, defendants were not bound to deliver a cargo of guano consigned to plaintiffs, while there was an indebtedness of \$40,000, without payment or security for the cargo so consigned. *Masters v. Barreda*, 415.
2. By the contract sued on the plaintiff agreed to complete certain work by the 1st of December, and the defendant agreed, when the work was completed, to give his notes for \$10,000, payable six months thereafter: Held, that the completion of the work at the time specified was a condition precedent to the right to the notes. *Slater v. Emerson*, 658.
3. Parol evidence of the necessity of completion of the work at the time, held to have weight in determining whether the covenants were dependent or independent. *Ib.*
4. A bill of lading which exempted the owner of the vessel (a steamboat) from perils or dangers of the river, does not exonerate him from loss by fire. *Garrison v. Memphis Ins. Co.*, 711.
5. If the bill excepts "dangers of the river" and "unavoidable accidents," he is not responsible for loss by fire, where no fault is shown. *Ib.*

ADMIRALTY, MARITIME LIEN, 11; CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, 10, 11; COPYRIGHT, 2; PATENT LAW, 1, 12, 13; STATUTES OF STATES, 7, 8.

COPYRIGHT.

1. Under the statute of New York, in virtue of which Comstock was appointed reporter of the decisions of the court of appeals, no copyright could be had in the reports. *Little v. Hall*, 143.
2. The contract of the reporter with a publishing house for the exclusive right to publish for his five years of office, did not confer on them any right to the manuscripts prepared by him for such reports; and no injunction could be issued by a federal court by virtue of the copyright acts of congress to prevent others from publishing them. *Ib.*
3. If plaintiffs have any remedy, it is by a personal action against Comstock on the contract. *Ib.*

COURT AND JURY.

1. What is color of title is matter of law to be decided by the court. What is good faith in making claim under such title is a matter of fact for the jury. *Wright v. Mattison*, 40.
2. A tax title not fatally defective on its face may be color of title, to be determined by the court in connection with the facts. *Ib.*
3. It is not a necessary inference of law that a person in possession of land, claiming title, who permits it to be sold for taxes, cannot acquire, in good faith, a color of title by purchasing at such sale. The title may be sufficient to give color, and the jury must be left to decide on the good faith of the transaction. *Ib.*
4. The court may instruct a jury that there is not sufficient evidence to authorize them to find for plaintiff; but this can only be done when in fact there is no evidence to sustain plaintiff's claim. *Richardson v. The City of Boston*, 675.

5. It should be left to the jury to determine the locality, lines, corners, low-water mark, &c., referred to in a written document at the time it was made; also whether the effect of certain drains is to injure the property of plaintiff. *Ib.*

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2. Under the authority conferred by the deed of trust in this case, the trustee was authorized to sell for an installment of interest due and unpaid, though the principal sum was not due. *Richards v. Holmes*, 125.
3. And this is so, though the deed did not show that any interest was due before the note became due, the note being referred to in the deed. *Ib.*
4. An authority to sell, after advertising the time and place of sale, authorizes the trustee, in the exercise of a sound discretion, to postpone the sale more than once, if due notice is given of the postponement. *Ib.*

5. The holder of the note secured by the deed may leave a bid with the auctioneer, and if it is the highest bid that can be obtained, his purchase will be valid. *Ib.*
6. Plaintiff in error, having recovered a judgment against the canal company, served a writ of foreign attachment on the goods, rights, credits, &c., of the company in the hands of defendants. Defendants held certain bonds, as trustees, for payment of specific debts of the canal company, and it appeared that after all these were paid there remained a large sum in the hands of defendants. Held: 1. That the canal company could have sued defendants at law and recovered this balance. 2. That by the law of Maryland this was the test of their liability to an attachment for that fund in their hands. 3. That any party having a paramount legal claim on that fund could have intervened in the present suit and asserted his right. 4. That if such persons had only an equitable right, they must assert it by a bill of interpleader in chancery. 5. That a suit in chancery to which the plaintiff in this suit was no party, or if a party, the suit was dismissed as to him, without prejudice to his legal rights in express terms, cannot be used to defeat his right to recover in this garnishee proceeding. *McLaughlin v. Swann*, 176.
7. Where a party not within the jurisdiction of a court is proceeded against by publication or warning order under statutory provision, if he enters his appearance and defends, he is as much bound by the decree as if served with process within the jurisdiction. *Shields v. Thomas*, 209.
8. A bill in equity which seeks to enforce a decree of another court in favor of several distributees of an estate against a party liable for assets received, is not multifarious because the plaintiffs have, in the decree sued on, had several sums decreed to them as distributees of the estate. In such case they claim through a common title, and defendant is liable on one transaction, though to several persons. *Ib.*
9. A bill in chancery is an appropriate mode of obtaining the benefit of a decree in chancery in a foreign court, though an action at law might be sustained for the sum awarded by the first decree. *Ib.*
10. Nor should any court decree on a bill to quiet title in favor of a party who has voluntarily purchased at a nominal sum the legal title, which he knew was in litigation in another court, from one of the parties to that suit. *Orton v. Smith*, 218.
11. Where a chancery suit involves complicated accounts, it should be referred to a master, and objections to his report should be made by exceptions in the court below. *Ransom v. Winn*, 249.
12. A stockholder in a corporation may bring a suit in equity which ought to have been brought by the corporation, when the directors refuse to do so, and when the circumstances of the case justify the interference of the chancellor. *Dodge v. Woolsey*, 284.
13. The circumstances under which such a suit will be sustained, and the limitations of the right, considered very fully. *Ib.*
14. To such a suit other parties besides the directors and the corporation may be made, as the ends of justice and the rules of chancery proceedings require. *Ib.*
15. Nor is it any objection that the stockholder, who is complainant, by reason of his citizenship, brings the suit in a court of the United States, when the corporation could not have done so. *Ib.*
16. The statutes of Mississippi authorized the court which declares the charter of a banking company forfeited to appoint a trustee to wind up its affairs. Both by the statutes of the State and the more modern decisions of the courts of England chancery has jurisdiction to protect the rights both of creditors and stockholders in such cases. *Bacon v. Robertson*, 406.
17. Hence, where, after paying all the debts of the corporation, there remained a large amount of property, credits, &c., in the hands of the trustee, for which he refused to account to the stockholders, they may maintain a bill in chancery to compel him to such accounting, and for a distribution of the surplus in his hands. *Ib.*
18. In a bill brought to set aside a sale for fraud, made under the direction of a probate

- court, eighty years after said sale was made, the bill should be very specific in its allegations of fraud, and the time of discovering it, and the proof very clear. *Moore v. Greene*, 572.
19. In such case it is not necessary for those claiming under the sale by order of the probate court to prove the regularity of its proceedings, but the party assailing the title must prove the fraud or other illegality. *Ib.*
  20. A bill in chancery in circuit court cannot be dismissed for want of jurisdiction on motion made after answer, and while the parties are perfecting the pleading, the practice in the State courts notwithstanding. *Botts v. Lewis*, 574.
  21. It should not be dismissed on that ground until the hearing, because the parties might perfect the bill before final hearing. *Ib.*
  22. In a bill to set aside a judicial sale of real estate, a mortgagee who had received the proceeds of the sale on account of his mortgage is a necessary party, because he is interested to uphold the sale. *Coiron v. Millaudon*, 596.
  23. The fact that the suit is brought in a federal court, and that such mortgagee is not within its jurisdiction, does not enable the court to proceed without him. *Ib.*
  24. Neither the act of congress of 1839 (5 Stats. at Large, 321) nor the 47th rule of this court authorizes a circuit court to make a decree in the absence of a party whose rights must necessarily be affected by it. *Ib.*
  25. Fraud in the execution of an instrument, sealed or unsealed, may be set up to impeach it in a court of law. *Hartshorn v. Day*, 650.
  26. But a sealed instrument, or a judgment of a court of law, can only be impeached for fraud in its consideration by a direct proceeding in chancery, where all proper parties and just remedies can be administered, and not in a court of law, where it is introduced collaterally as evidence. *Ib.*
  27. Where a bill in equity is brought to recover real estate which is founded on a purely legal title, the court has not jurisdiction. *Hipp v. Babin*, 679.
  28. Nor is this rule varied by the fact that an account for rents and profits is asked, or that defendants may have an undivided interest in the title, so that a partition might become necessary. *Ib.*
  29. An attorney for a defendant who had pleaded successfully a subsequent discharge in bankruptcy, taxed defendant's costs for the clerk, had execution issued on a judgment for the costs, and levied upon lands of non-resident plaintiff worth fifty thousand dollars, and bought them in for nine dollars and thirteen cents, directing the levy and urging the sale against the wishes of the sheriff: Held, to be a fraud and extortion, and the sale, after conveyance, set aside as void, in chancery. *Byers v. Surget*, 702.
  30. An insurance company which pays the loss to the owner of the cargo can sue the owner of the vessel for the loss, and can sue in chancery, where there are many bills of lading, each of which would require a separate suit at law. *Garrison v. The Memphis Ins. Co.*, 711.
  31. A court of equity, in enforcing a hard contract of insurance, may render a decree for the loss, where it has occurred before suit. *Commercial Mutual Marine Ins. Co. v. Union Mutual Ins. Co.*, 716.
  32. Where a bill is filed by a creditor to assert a lien given to secure a surety in the principal debt, the surety and the trustee in the deed by which the lien was given are necessary parties. *McRae v. The Branch Bank of Alabama*, 772.
  33. But where the same bill seeks relief, on the ground of a conveyance by the debtor to his sister, for the purpose of defrauding the creditor, the bill may be sustained without the parties to the other transaction being brought before the court. *Ib.*
  34. It is the doctrine of this court that a deed for real estate, absolute on its face, may be shown by parol to have been executed as a security for payment of money. *Babcock v. Wyman*, 691.
  35. A person in possession under such deed, holding as trustee, cannot avail himself of the statute of limitation. *Ib.*



## EVIDENCE.

1. A bill of lading acknowledging receipt of goods in good order imposes on the party giving it the necessity of overcoming this *prima facie* case by sufficient proof to the contrary. *The Ship Howard*, 189.
2. In this case the evidence satisfies the court so clearly that the goods (potatoes) were unsound when received, that on that ground the judgment of the district court, affirmed in the circuit court, is reversed. *Ib.*
3. The return of the marshal that he had levied on lands is *prima facie* evidence that there was no personal property on which he could levy. *Murray v. Hoboken Co.*, 227.
4. On a demurrer to evidence, or a prayer to instruct that there is no evidence of a contract set up in the declaration, the court properly overruled it, if there was any evidence from which the jury might have found the implied contract. *Nutt v. Minor*, 240.
5. A verbal mistake in the name of the corporation, in the first suit, does not render it void; and the judgment will be evidence in the second, if there is an averment that the defendant is the same corporation sued by the erroneous name in the first suit. *Lafayette Ins. Co. v. French*, 340.
6. It is not competent to show by parol testimony that the words "dangers of the river" are generally understood to include injury from fire. *Garrison v. The Memphis Ins. Co.*, 711.
7. A parol agreement to make insurance, by executing policy next day, is valid, and can be enforced where all the particulars of the agreement are understood. *Commercial Mutual Marine Ins. Co. v. Union Mutual Ins. Co.*, 716.
8. At common law such an agreement is valid, and there is nothing in the statute of the State of Massachusetts which renders it void. *Ib.*
9. Where a president of an insurance company has been held out as possessing authority to make such contracts, and his authority is not denied in the answer, his agreement will be held binding on the company. *Ib.*
10. The report of Edward Coles, register of the land office at Edwardsville, found in the American State Papers, can be read in evidence from those papers, which are public documents, the authority of which is not open to controversy. *Bryan v. Forsyth*, 731.
11. The deed of a married woman, not signed by her, or acknowledged as the law requires, is not valid, though her name, with her husband's, is attached to the deed, there being no evidence to show it to be her act. *Meegan v. Boyle*, 605.
12. Nor can a certified copy of the deed, though recorded, be received as evidence where the original is incompetent. *Ib.*
13. So a will never proved or admitted to record, under which nothing was ever done or performed for a great many years, the execution of which is not proved to the court, cannot now be received in evidence to defeat the title claimed under the heirs of the supposed testator. *Ib.*
14. Neither such deeds nor such a will can be received as ancient instruments, under presumptions in their favor, because they are not valid on their face, and because the circumstances of the present case do not justify it. *Ib.*

ADMINISTRATION, 2; ADMIRALTY, COLLISION, 2; CONTRACT, COMMUNIST RECEIPT, 3, 4; CONTRACT, CONSTRUCTION OF, 3; COURT AND JURY, 1, 2, 3, 4; CUSTOMS DUTIES, 5, 7; MISSOURI LAND TITLES, 3, 12, 13; RES JUDICATA, 2, 3; WILLS, 4.

## EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS.

1. The act of the secretary of the navy, in transmitting a sum of money (\$1,000) to an officer of the navy in Paris, to be expended in payment for medicine and medical attendance on himself, cannot be revised by the comptroller of the treasury so as to charge the officer with the same. *United States v. Jones*, 78.

## INDIANS.

1. The Cherokee nation is not a foreign nation, but in its semi-civilized state bears a close analogy to a provisional government of a territorial character. *Mackey v. Coxe*, 84.
2. The courts will respect their laws concerning property, its descent, and administration of estates, and give effect to them; therefore administrators appointed under their authority could make a valid power of attorney to receive money due to the estate from the United States. *Ib.*
3. Although an executor or administrator cannot sue in a foreign jurisdiction, yet he may lawfully receive a debt due the decedent and voluntarily paid in another State, and the payment will discharge the debt. *Ib.*
4. The agent, by power of attorney of the administrator in the Cherokee courts, took out administration in the District of Columbia, to receive of the United States a sum due to the decedent's estate. He then, as attorney for plaintiffs, the original administrators, receipted to himself as administrator here on the money so received. Held, that as he was entitled to receive it, both as agent and as administrator, his sureties on the administration bond were no longer liable for the amount received by him. *Ib.*
5. *CURTIS and NELSON*. Held, that the suit could not be maintained, because no order for distribution or payment had been made by the probate court of the District of Columbia. *Ib.*
6. Notwithstanding the treaties of 1838 and 1842, between the Seneca Indians and the United States, by which they agreed to remove west of the Mississippi, no one can enforce their removal but the United States. *Fellows v. Blacksmith*, 763.
7. Hence a party who, under a grant from Massachusetts, is the owner of the land on which they reside, and entitled to possession on their removal, is a trespasser if he intrudes on them, though it be after the time limited by the treaty for their removal. *Ib.*

## JURISDICTION OF CIRCUIT COURTS.

## ———CITIZENSHIP.

1. Where the declaration alleges the proper citizenship of the parties, the only mode of contesting it is by a plea in abatement denying such citizenship. In such plea the burden of proof is on the defendant. *Jones v. League*, 64.
2. A change of residence, with real intent to remain, makes a change of citizenship, and though made with intent to give jurisdiction, will be sufficient for that purpose. *Ib.*
3. But where the conveyance of title made to such person by a citizen of the State in which the suit is brought contains matter which shows that neither the ownership of the property so conveyed nor the pretended change of residence is *bona fide*, the court will not entertain jurisdiction if there is a plea denying the citizenship of plaintiff. *Ib.*
4. The courts of the United States should not entertain jurisdiction of a bill to quiet title, when the effect of its decree must be to bring it in collision with that of a State court having prior jurisdiction of the same matter. *Orton v. Smith*, 218.
5. This objection is not removed by adding to the decree a reservation of the rights of the parties in the former suit, when those rights must be in inevitable conflict with the decree of the federal court. *Ib.*
6. Where a number of shareholders of a corporation are citizens of States other than that in which the trustee resides, they may maintain such a suit in the courts of the United States, on behalf of themselves and all shareholders not citizens of that State, against the trustee of the corporation and the other stockholders, citizens of the same State with the trustee. *Bacon v. Robertson*, 406.
7. Circuit courts have no power to set aside, on motion, their decrees, after the term at which they were rendered. *Cameron v. McRoberts*, 3 Wheaton, 591. *McMicken v. Perin*, 433.

8. The circuit court can have no jurisdiction of an appeal from the district court when there is not a final decree in the latter. *The Schooner Mary Eddy*, 643.
9. If the circuit court render a decree on the merits in such case, all that this court can do on appeal is to reverse the decree of the circuit court, with directions to that court to dismiss the appeal from the district court, that the latter may proceed to render a final decree. *Ib.*

———CITIZENSHIP OF CORPORATION.

1. In a suit in the circuit courts, it is not a sufficient averment of citizenship to describe the defendant as "The Lafayette Insurance Company, a citizen of the State of Indiana." *Lafayette Ins. Co. v. French*, 340.
2. This court does not hold that either a voluntary association of persons, or an association into a body politic, created by law, is a citizen of a State, within the meaning of the constitution; but a statement that the defendants are a corporation created under the laws of the State of Indiana, having its principal place of business in that State, is sufficient. They bring the case within *Marshall v. The Railroad Co.*, 16 How. 314; 21 Curtis, 153. *Ib.*

———REMOVAL OF CAUSES FROM STATE COURTS.

1. In a proceeding in a State court, however special or summary it may be, these constitute no objection to its removal to a federal court by a citizen of another State, who is a proper defendant to the proceedings. *Parker v. Overman*, 121.
2. In a petition for such removal, he must describe the citizenship of the parties; which is not done by giving their residence. The terms "citizen" and "resident" of a State are not synonymous. *Ib.*
3. A case removed from a State court to the circuit court of the United States should not be remanded because some of the mere nominal parties are citizens of the same State with plaintiffs. *Wood v. Davis*, 395.
4. Persons holding possession of notes which are the subject of controversy, as mere agents of the party seeking the removal, and without interest in the notes, and attorneys employed to collect the notes, are such nominal parties; and the case should not be remanded because they are made co-defendants. *Ib.*

EQUITY, 15, 20, 23; WILLS, PROBATE OF, 1, 2.

JURISDICTION OF SUPREME COURT.

1. No appeal lies from an order of the court below, which is nothing more than recording the mandate of this court in the same case, once heard here on appeal or writ of error, and such an appeal will be dismissed and a *procedendo* awarded. *United States v. Fremont*, 28.
2. The court reasserts the principle that an order dissolving an injunction is not such a final decree that an appeal lies to this court. *Verden v. Coleman*, 71.
3. A judgment rendered against a marshal, on a rule to show cause why he should not pay money in his hands to another party, and a counter rule in favor of the plaintiff under whose process it was seized, is not such a judgment as this court can re-examine. *Bayard v. Lombard*, 9 How. 530; 18 Curtis, 252. *Curtis v. Petitpain*, 93.
4. The supreme court of Louisiana held the plaintiffs in error liable to a tax on succession, on the ground that they were citizens of France. They asserted themselves to be citizens of Louisiana. None of the questions mentioned in the 25th section of the judiciary act were raised by the record or decided by the court below, and this court has no jurisdiction. *Heirs of Poydras de la Lande v. Treasurer of Louisiana*, 16.
5. A petition for rehearing in the State court cannot raise such question, unless it appear in the record of the case or necessarily arises out of it. *Ib.*
6. A decree is not final so as to authorize an appeal which, while it settles the right of plaintiffs to recover, refers to a master the adjustment of complicated accounts, from

which the amount due from plaintiffs to defendants is to be ascertained. *Craighead v. Wilson*, 166.

7. On a bill filed in a State court, to set aside the discharge of a bankrupt, that court sustained a demurrer to the bill. Such a decree confers no jurisdiction on this court, because it does not appear that any construction of the bankrupt law was made by the court or was necessary to its judgment; and second, if any such matter was considered, the decision was in favor of the right claimed under the bankrupt act, and not against it. *Calcote v. Stanton*, 200.
8. To bring one of the questions mentioned in the 25th section of the judiciary act before this court, it is not sufficient to raise the objection here, and to show that it was involved in the controversy in the State court, and might have been considered by it when making its decision. It must appear on the face of the record that it was in fact raised, and that the judicial mind was exercised upon it, and the decision was against the right claimed under it. *The Victory*, 6 Wallace, 382; *Railroad Co. v. Rock*, 4 Wallace, 177. *Maxwell v. Newbold*, 436.
9. The fact that the effect of a judgment in one State, and a sale under it, in defeating liens on the same property in another State, was raised, does *not* show that the court was called upon to consider the constitutional provision and the act of congress concerning the faith and credit due from the courts of one State to the judicial records of another State. *Ib.*
10. This court will take jurisdiction, though the decree below be *pro forma*, where the circuit judge on appeal from the district court is interested. *The Steamer Oregon*, 490.
11. The statute of the Territory of Minnesota concerning the admission and removal of attorneys differs but little from the common law, and leaves those matters very largely in the discretion of the courts. *Ex parte Secombe*, 525.
12. But this must be a judicial discretion, and not an arbitrary, unregulated exercise of power. Therefore an order dismissing an attorney for conduct in the presence of the court is the exercise of a judicial discretion vested by law in the court; and though the judgment of removal was without notice or hearing, this court cannot review that judgment and restore the party on a petition for a writ of *mandamus*. *Ib.*
13. Where both parties claim the same land under different patents from the State, and the State court did not decide the case on any construction of the acts of congress, this court cannot review its judgment. *Shaffer v. Seudday*, 528.
14. Nor does the opinion of the secretary of the interior, that one of the claims was improperly located, vary the proposition. *Ib.*
15. This court has no jurisdiction of an appeal or writ of error where the record is not filed with the clerk during the term next after the appeal is taken or the writ issued. *The Steamer Virginia*, 636.
16. But another appeal or writ of error may be taken and presented within the time limited by statute for appeals and writs of error. *Ib.*
17. Where the decision of the State court turned upon the construction and effect to be given to the acts of congress and of the officers executing them, and the decision is against the title set up under these, this court has power to review the judgment. *Cousin v. Labatut*, 645.
18. Where the question decided by the State court is, that a patent for land from the United States is invalid, the party claiming under that patent can bring a writ of error to this court. *Bell v. Hearne*, 670.
19. The cases as to what constitutes a final decree from which an appeal will lie considered. *Beebe v. Russell*, 686.
20. It will not lie when there is a reference to a master to ascertain and state an account on which a decree of the court must afterwards be had. *Ib.*
21. No appeal lies from an interlocutory decree referring a case to the clerk or master to state an account between the parties. Previous case referred to. *Farrelly v. Woodfolk*, 690.

22. The right claimed in a case for the distribution of a pension after pensioner's death being dependent on the construction of an act of congress, a writ of error lies to the judgment of a State court adverse to the right claimed under the act. *Walton v. Cotton*, 751.
23. This court can only look to the record to ascertain its appellate jurisdiction under the 25th section of the judiciary act, and the opinion of the court is no part of the record. *Michigan Central R. R. Co. v. Michigan Southern R. R. Co.* 774.
24. Where it appears that the judgment of the State court involved only the construction of State statutes admitted to be valid, this court has no jurisdiction. *Ib.*
25. Where plaintiff in error in ejectment claimed nothing under the authority of the laws of the United States, but objected to the validity of the claim set up by the other side, of settlement under acts of congress, this court has no jurisdiction, because the judgment of the court was in favor of the authority so set up. *Burke v. Gaines*, 784.

PRACTICE IN CIRCUIT COURT, 2, 3; PRACTICE IN SUPREME COURT, 8, 11, 15, 16, 27.

## LAND TITLES.

### —GENERALLY.

1. Where a lot is conveyed by a reference to a plat recorded in the proper office, the contesting party also claiming by a deed referring to the same plat as recorded, the original of the recorded plat cannot be received as evidence to show that the one recorded was erroneous. *Jones v. Johnston*, 131.
2. Nor is it material that the plat is not recorded in accordance with the statutes regulating that matter. The reference for purpose of description is to *that plat*, and the formalities prescribed by law for its record do not affect it as a means of identifying the boundaries. *Ib.*
3. If there was in fact an error in the plat, so that it did not describe the land *intended* to be conveyed, this could only be corrected in chancery. *Ib.*
4. Accretions by gradual deposits to land with a water front, made after a plan of the lots is platted, do not pass to a purchaser from the proprietor, unless the description is such as to include them. It does not pass as appurtenant to the lot as originally laid out. *Ib.*
5. In deciding the claim of plaintiffs to a water front, and to accretions thereto, the condition of the water front, as regards his lot, *at the time he recorded his deed*, is to be considered, and not at the time the plat was made. *Ib.*
6. In case the lot had a water front at the time plaintiff recorded his deed, then the rule of ascertaining his share of the accretion is laid down in the opinion, but cannot be epitomized here. *Banks v. Ogden*, 2 Wall. 57. *Ib.*

### —PATENTS.

1. Under the act of March 3, 1817, the secretary of the treasury was authorized to decide when an Indian reservee had abandoned his land, and the secretary alone could offer it for public sale. *Minter v. Crommelin*, 72.
2. A patent issued by him for such land carries the presumption that the reservee has abandoned it, and that all the acts necessary to make a perfect sale have been complied with. *Ib.*
3. Although a patent may be defeated by showing a want of power in the officer by whom it was made, this must be established by the party assailing it. No presumption will be indulged that the officer did not do his duty in such case. *Ib.*
4. Patent issued to Lafayette and his heirs in 1825, on a location made by him in 1807, on vacant lands outside the line of six hundred yards abandoned by congress to the city of New Orleans, was held to be good for only such parts of the land surveyed and patented as were found to be vacant after congress had investigated and passed upon private claims prior in date to this entry. *Heirs of Lafayette v. Kenton*, 164.
5. That the patent containing on its face a plat on which the vacant parts were dis-

tinguished from that covered by valid claims, this plat was conclusive in a suit founded on the patent. *Ib.*

6. By virtue of the acts of congress of 1819 (3 Stats. at Large, 528) and 1822, (*idem*, 707,) the register and receiver of the land office had a right to direct on what land a confirmation under the act of 1812 should be located. *Cousin v. Labatut*, 645.
7. A survey made under the certificate of those officers in 1846 constituted a good title as against the United States, and a *prima facie* title against all persons. *Ib.*
8. But until the survey was made, the United States had the right to sell and convey the land to others; and a person who obtained the patent of the United States, prior to the survey in 1846, has the paramount title as to so much of the land in dispute as his patent covers. *Ib.*
9. As to all the land in dispute not covered by such patent, the certificate and survey are *prima facie evidence* of title, notwithstanding a supposed variance in the names of the parties under whom the original claim was made. *Ib.*
10. Where the register and receiver of the land office received plaintiff's money, gave him the usual patent certificate, but by mistake reported it to the general land office as James Bell instead of John Bell, the patent issued to James Bell may be recalled and canceled, though it may have been sent to the register of the land office for him, but never delivered. *Bell v. Hearne*, 670.
11. Such a patent conveys no title, and cannot affect the title under the patent afterwards rightfully issued to John Bell. *Ib.*
12. Where a patent or grant for land issues from the government, either by the legislative or executive branch, it can only be impeached for fraud at the suit of the government. Hence no such question can be raised in an action of ejectment. *Field v. Seabury*, 721.
13. Where, under the acts of 1820 and 1823, concerning settlement rights to Peoria town lots, a claim had been reported favorably, and, under the act of 1823, a survey was made in 1840, and a patent issued in 1845, the title of this patent relates back to 1823. *Bryan v. Forsyth*, 731.
14. It is, with the survey and other documents, superior to a patent on an ordinary entry issued in 1838, which contained a reservation of the rights of all persons claiming under the act of 1823. *Ib.*
15. But such junior patent is sufficient color of title for the seven years' statute of limitations of Illinois; and the time under that statute begins to run from the date of the survey in 1840, because from that date the other party had a title on which ejectment could have been maintained. *Ib.*
16. The titles are the same in this as in the preceding case; but the map of the survey is wholly insufficient to make good the patent issued under the act of 1823. *Bal-lance v. Papin*, 740.
17. Where a Spanish grant is confirmed, which lacks specific boundaries or location, no title passes until the location is made by a survey. *Ledoux v. Black*, 401.
18. A person acquiring title by patent before this is done from the United States, will not have his title defeated by the subsequent location of the confirmed claim on the same land. *Stanford v. Taylor*, 18 How. 409, *ante*. *Ib.*

#### MISSOURI LAND TITLES, 10, 11.

#### —SCHOOL LANDS.

1. The act of Congress authorizing Michigan to organize as a State, like all other similar acts, granted the sixteenth section of every township to the State for school purposes. *Cooper v. Roberts*, 147.
2. When the State accepted this act, the grant became a contract or compact between the State and the United States. *Ib.*
3. As the government extended its surveys, so that the location of these sections was ascertained, the title in the State became complete. *Ib.*
4. Neither a lease made by the United States for mining purposes, nor the acts of con-



gress of March 1, 1847, and September 1, 1850, were intended to or did impair the title of the State to these sections, nor was the consent of congress necessary to a valid sale by the State. *Ib.*

5. A trespasser upon one of these sections claiming a title adverse to that of the State under the compact aforesaid, has no right to inquire into mere irregularities in the mode by which the State sells the land under her own statutes. He has no interest in that question. *Ib.*

MISSOURI LAND TITLES, 6, 7, 8.

#### LIMITATIONS, STATUTE OF.

See ADMINISTRATORS, 3; LAND TITLES, 15; MISSOURI LAND TITLES, 15.

#### MISSOURI LAND TITLES.

1. Under the acts of Congress of June 13, 1812, May 26, 1824, and January 27, 1831, concerning these lots, all the title of the United States passed to the State of Missouri, or to the inhabitants of the towns, the former to be disposed of or regulated for the use of schools, as the legislature of the State might direct. *Kissell v. St. Louis Public Schools*, 17.
2. The legislature of Missouri vested this interest in the board of commissioners of the St. Louis public schools, so far as the lots of that town were concerned. *Ib.*
3. The certificate of the surveyor, made in 1843, designating these out-lots and common field lots, is record evidence of title, conclusive between the government of the United States and the commissioners of public schools, and is good until some superior title is shown. *Ib.*
4. An entry made in 1836, by virtue of a pre-emption right, of one of these lots, is not such superior title, because such lands were appropriated and not subject to entry, and were beyond the control of the officers who allowed the entry. *Ib.*
5. Nor could the party who made the entry be heard to say he did not know that it was so appropriated. This could not make his entry valid. *Ib.*
6. It was the intention of the 6th section of the act of March, 1820, under which the State of Missouri was organized, to grant to the State, for school purposes, every sixteenth section of land not otherwise disposed of to which the United States had a good title. *Ham v. State of Missouri*, 110.
7. The 10th section of the act of March 3, 1811, and its proviso, did not hinder the United States from making this grant. *Ib.*
8. The confirmation by congress, in the act of 1828, of the claim of the proprietors of Mine la Motte, which had been rejected several years before the act of 1820, did not, nor was it intended to, defeat the title to the sixteenth section which passed by the act of 1820. It only purported to relinquish such title as the United States had at its passage in 1828. *Ib.*
9. The doctrine of the case of *Guitard v. Stoddard*, 16 How. 494, reaffirmed, that whether the lot and its habitation and cultivation or possession comes within the protection of the act of 1812 were questions of fact to be submitted to the jury; and that the neglect to procure a survey and location, under the act of 1824, did not forfeit the title acquired under the former act. *Savignac v. Garrison*, 119.
10. Where there is a tract of land with specific boundaries, confirmed according to those ascertained boundaries, the confirmer has a title on which he can maintain ejectment. *Stanford v. Taylor*, 346.
11. But where the claim has no ascertained or specific boundaries, and the judgment of confirmation requires a survey to ascertain its location, the executive department alone can fix the boundaries by the proper survey, and that, when made, is conclusive in an action at law. *Ib.*
12. Extrinsic testimony cannot be received to show that by the survey the land was not correctly located. *Ib.*
13. In an action of ejectment, where the contest is between conflicting confirmations of

Spanish grants, the prior confirmation and survey must prevail, and the jury are not at liberty to consider whether the survey and patent correspond with the confirmation. *Willot v. Sandford*, 581.

14. The act of congress of March 3, 1811, reserving lands from sale which had been claimed before a board of commissioners, has no application to such a case as this. *Ib.*
15. The statute of limitations of Missouri does not run against a married woman during coverture, and she has an action of ejectment twenty years after discoverture to assert her title. *Meegan v. Boyle*, 605.

#### NEGOTIABLE PAPER.

1. A payee of a note may, without indorsing it, transfer it by a separate instrument, and his liability will be governed exclusively by the covenants of that instrument. *Richards v. Holmes*, 125.
2. By the general commercial law, a right of action on a bill of exchange accrues against the indorser on protest and notice of non-acceptance, though payable at a time long subsequent. *Watson v. Turpley*, 442.
3. This right cannot be defeated as against the citizen of another State who sues in a court of the United States, by a statute of the State where the indorser resides and is sued. *Ib.*
4. The facts of the demand and notice being undisputed, it is for the court, and not for the jury, to determine their sufficiency in law to fix the liability of the indorser. *Ib.*

#### OFFICE.

##### ———APPOINTMENT, WHEN COMPLETE.

1. Where a person has been nominated for an office, his nomination confirmed by the senate, and his commission been sealed and signed by the president, his appointment to that office is complete. *United States v. Le Baron*, 575.
2. The death of the president before the commission reaches the officer does not affect it. *Ib.*

#### OYSTER BEDS,

##### ———STATE JURISDICTION.

1. Whatever soil below low-water mark, within the ebb and flow of the tide, is the subject of exclusive property and ownership, belongs to the State within whose territory it lies. *Smith v. State of Maryland*, 59.
2. But this soil is held by the State subject to, and in some sense in trust for, the enjoyment of certain public rights, among which is the common liberty of fishing. *Ib.*
3. This includes the liberty of taking shell-fish as well as floating fish. *Ib.*
4. The court expressly refrains from giving an opinion whether this right is restricted to citizens of the State, or can be so restricted by State statutes, or whether it can be extended, by treaty made with the United States, to foreigners, or is made common to all citizens of the United States by the federal constitution. *Ib.*
5. In any of these views of the subject, it is the right of the State to make and enforce laws regulating the exercise of this right, so as to prevent the destruction of the fishery, and to prevent acts which would render the public right less valuable, or destroy it altogether. *Ib.*
6. A statute, therefore, which forbids a mode of fishing for oysters which would destroy the beds altogether, and which forfeits the vessel engaged in that mode of taking oysters, is valid. *Ib.*
7. And its application by the State authorities to a vessel licensed and enrolled by the United States for the coasting trade, is no violation of such license or of the right of the United States to regulate commerce under the federal constitution. *Ib.*
8. Nor does it interfere with the admiralty jurisdiction of the United States, nor that provision of the constitution which forbids warrants of seizure to be issued only on probable cause, supported by oath. *Ib.*

## OFFICIAL BONDS.

## —SHERIFF.

1. The powers and duties of a sheriff are ministerial and judicial, or *quasi-judicial*. Of the latter character are his functions as conservator of the peace. *South v. State of Maryland*, 337.
2. For a failure to perform these latter duties, he is not liable in a civil action by an individual, without allegation of a special right in the plaintiff, in which he is injured materially. The nature of these duties compared with his ministerial duties in serving process of courts, &c. *Ib.*
3. The sureties on his official bond are only liable in regard to this latter class of duties. *Ib.*
4. A bond to secure the performance of the duties of a deputy postmaster is operative from the time it reaches the postmaster general and is approved by him, and the recitals of the bond relate to that date. *The United States v. Le Baron*, 575.
5. Hence, where a bond recited that whereas O. B. is now postmaster at Mobile, and he was, at the date of the bond, acting as postmaster under a previous appointment, it shall be held to be a security for his duties under a new appointment, confirmed subsequently to the date of the bond, but before it was delivered to the postmaster general for approval. *Ib.*
6. This principle holds the sureties on such bond for the duties of the officer under the latter appointment. *Ib.*

## PATENT LAW.

1. An agreement between a patentee and another person, by which the latter becomes part owner of the patent, and agrees to conduct exclusively the business of manufacturing the patented machines, is not void as in restraint of trade. *Kinsman v. Parkhurst*, 243.
2. Nor can the party so manufacturing and selling, when called on for an account, deny the validity of the patent or the originality of the invention. *Ib.*
3. Nor can he set up a right to manufacture the patented article under a license from a third person. *Ib.*
4. Nor can he evade his obligation to his partner by a transfer of his right to another person by assignment. *Ib.*
5. Under the 9th section of the act of March 3, 1837, concerning a disclaimer of claims not valid by the patentee, it is a question for the court, and not for the jury, whether the disclaimer has been unreasonably delayed, so as to forfeit the claim of the patentee under other parts of patent that are valid. *Seymour v. McCormick*, 589.
6. If, however, such disclaimer is not made before the suit is brought, the patentee can have no costs, though he recover a judgment as to other claims in his patent. Costs in this case are therefore denied. *Ib.*
7. The second claim of McCormick, in his patent of 1845, namely, "I claim the reversed angle of the teeth of the blade, in manner described," is a distinct claim for the reversed angle of the teeth alone, and cannot be connected with other parts of the patent to make it valid. *Ib.*
8. The reading, on the trial, of the description of an invention from a publication, to show priority of invention, is evidence of nothing else but of the description of the thing in controversy, and is not evidence of the successful operation of the machine, though it states that it was successful. *Ib.*
9. Therefore the statement in such a work that a machine had been partially successful in 1828 and 1829, with the statement of a witness that it was used successfully in 1853, is not evidence from which the jury can infer that it was used successfully in the intermediate time, because there is no legal evidence that it was successful in 1828 or 1829. *Ib.*
10. The use of a patented article by a foreign ship, in entering and leaving one of our ports, does not create a right of action in the patentee. *Brown v. Duchesne*, 637.

11. The use of such a patent in the construction, fitting out, or equipment of such a vessel is not an infringement of the rights of a patentee, provided it was placed on the vessel in a foreign port, and was authorized by the laws of the country to which she belongs. *Ib.*
12. A patentee may make a valid contract for the sale or assignment of his patent before it issues; also of a renewal. *Hartshorn v. Day*, 650.
13. A contract by which the patentee transfers his interest in the patent for several considerations, one of which is an annuity to be paid him by the transferee, cannot be rescinded by the patentee, on his own motion, for a failure to pay the annuity, where he has left that payment to rest on the personal covenant of the other party. In such case his remedy is by an action for damages on that covenant. *Ib.*

#### PENSION.

The word "children," in the act of June 4, 1832, granting revolutionary pensions, is to be construed so as to include grandchildren, where the question of distribution among children is provided for in the act. *Walton v. Cotton*, 751.

#### PRACTICE IN CIRCUIT COURT.

1. There is no error in the court having permitted a copy of the original writ to be filed, the original having been lost after it had served its purpose by bringing the defendants into court. *Burchell v. Marsh*, 17 How. 344. *York and Cumberland R. R. Co. v. Myers*, 203.
2. A service of the declaration in ejectment on the tenant in possession, ten days before the term of the circuit court for the District of Columbia, authorizes a judgment by default, where the tenant fails to appear. *Connor v. Peugh's Lessee*, 336.
3. On a motion at a subsequent term by the tenant, to set aside the judgment and permit a defense, the action of the court was discretionary, and is not the subject of review in this court. *Ib.*
4. The act of congress of July 20, 1840, which authorizes the courts of the United States to conform the rules for impaneling jurors to those of the State in which the court is held, extends to the right of challenge. *The United States v. Shackelford*, 506.
5. But this does not include trials for treason and other capital offenses, for these are regulated by section 30 of the crimes act of 1790. 1 Statutes at Large, 119. *Ib.*
6. Unless the laws and usages of the State court permit it, the prosecution should not be allowed any peremptory challenge. *Ib.*

ATTORNEY AND CLIENT, 3, 4; EQUITY, 11, 20; EVIDENCE, 4; JURISDICTION OF CIRCUIT COURTS, 7-9.

#### PRACTICE IN SUPREME COURT.

1. Where defendant in error files a copy of the record within the time allowed by the rule of the court, and plaintiff afterwards, but also within the time prescribed by the rule, files a copy, the case as docketed by plaintiff shall stand for hearing, and that of the defendant be dismissed. *Hartshorn v. Day*, 24.
2. Where an appellant or plaintiff in error fails to file with the clerk a transcript of the record within the first six days of the term next after taking his appeal, the appellee is entitled to have the appeal docketed and dismissed under the rules of this court, on producing the certificate of the inferior court that such appeal had been taken. *United States v. Fremont*, 26.
3. The fact that the clerk of the circuit court had other duties to perform, which kept him from making out the transcript of the record, will not be received as a ground to extend the time within which the rule of this court requires plaintiff to file such a transcript here. *Sturgess v. Harrold*, 31.
4. The supreme court refuses a motion for rehearing a cause on the ground that the mandate had remitted the case to the court below. *Peck v. Sanderson*, 32.
5. On a writ of error this court cannot review a judgment founded on an agreed state-

- ment of facts, which statement is not in itself sufficient without a comparison and weighing of the evidence by this court. *Graham v. Bayne*, 49.
6. No mere agreement of counsel can substitute evidence of facts in place of legal facts, or require the opinion of this court on an imperfect statement of them; nor can this court, on writ of error, weigh and compare evidence as on an appeal in chancery. *Ib.*
  7. Where such an agreed statement has been made, neither party being to blame for its insufficiency, to raise the legal questions supposed to be involved in the case, this court may treat it as a mistrial, and reverse the judgment, that a new trial may be had. 18 How. 135; 1 Wall 99; 12 Wall. 275. *Ib.*
  8. The court reasserts the principle that an order dissolving an injunction is not such a final decree as can be re-examined in this court, unless it disposes of the bill, although such order may have been affirmed on appeal in a State court. *Verden v. Coleman*, 71.
  9. A record which contains only an agreed statement of facts, and the judgment of the court thereon, is not a compliance with the rules of this court, numbers 11 and 31, on that subject. *Curtis v. Petispain*, 93.
  10. In a suit at law submitted to the court without a jury, where the record shows no agreed statement of facts, nor finding of facts by the court, nor bill of exceptions to the ruling of the court, there is nothing into which this court can look for error, and the judgment must be affirmed. *Graham v. Bayne*, 18 H. 60, *ante*; *Kearney v. Case*, 12 Wall. 275. *Guild v. Frontin*, 118.
  11. This court will refuse to hear an appeal where the decree is not final, though neither party raises the objection. *Craighead v. Wilson*, 166.
  12. This court allowed the attorney general to dismiss and discontinue a case brought here by writ of error on behalf of the United States, on his statement that the record did not present certain matters which the attorney general considered necessary to a decision of the questions intended to be raised in the case. *United States v. Minnesota and Northwestern R. R. Co.*, 198.
  13. Error or mistake in the report of a master in stating an account cannot be reversed on appeal, unless excepted to in the court below before confirmation. *Kinsman v. Parkhurst*, 213.
  14. A petition filed in the court below to be made party to a chancery suit already pending cannot be sustained in this court, unless the record of the original suit is before it. The appellant's petition in such case will be dismissed without prejudice. *Ransom v. Winn*, 249.
  15. The tenant who had not made an appearance, and was not a party to the action below, cannot prosecute a writ of error to the judgment against the casual ejector. *Connor v. Peugh's Lessee*, 336.
  16. This court has, in cases of original jurisdiction, the inherent power which belongs to all courts to award costs to the proper party, and render a judgment for them without the aid of a special act of congress. *State of Pennsylvania v. Wheeling Bridge Co.*, 387.
  17. There are numerous acts of congress recognizing this power in all the courts of the United States, including this court. *Ib.*
  18. Where the question of costs had been referred to the clerk, with directions to examine a witness, and his report, after being duly filed, was examined and confirmed by order of the court, without exception or objection, this court will not grant a petition for a re-examination of that subject by bill of review or otherwise. *Ib.*
  19. This court will enforce the duty of a return to a writ of error to a State court by a rule on the clerk of the court, where the writ is not obeyed. *United States v. Booth*, 403.
  20. Where such a case involves all the matters between the same parties, and others also that are involved in another case, the court will not hear the latter case until the full record is before the court in the first, where all the matters in both cases have grown out of the same transaction. *Ib.*
  21. This court will not review a master's report upon objections taken here for the first

- time, nor does an appeal lie from a refusal of the circuit court to open a decree once rendered. *McMicken v. Perin*, 433.
22. The certificate of a clerk of what took place in circuit court cannot be received in this court to contradict the record as it is found in the court below. That can only be corrected on *certiorari*, or by proceeding in the court below. *Hudgins v. Kemp*, 454.
  23. To enable this court to decide on a certificate of division of opinion between the judges of a circuit court, the question certified must be matter of law, and not matter of fact. It must state the point of law clearly, without leaving this court to weigh or compare evidence. *Dennistoun v. Stewart*, 486.
  24. The points must be stated separately and clearly, and must not bring the whole case here when it consists of controverted matter, both of law and facts. *Ib.*
  25. On a bill in equity the question of fraud is a mixed one of law and fact, and unless the facts are so certified as to raise the question distinctly, this court cannot take jurisdiction. *Ogilvie v. Knox Ins. Co.*, 497.
  26. Nor can this court, on such insufficient data, determine whether depositions are competent evidence, where the contents of the depositions are not in the record. *Ib.*
  27. Where a case is dismissed in this court for want of jurisdiction, no judgment for costs can be rendered. *Strader v. Graham*, 519.
  28. This court will, of its own motion, award a *certiorari* after a case has been submitted, if it discovers that an important paper, referred to in the bill of exceptions, is omitted in the transcript. *Morgan v. Curtenius*, 524.
  29. Where a case has been submitted to a jury on plea of not guilty, and there was a verdict for defendants, and no bill of exceptions is found in the record, there is nothing of which the court can predicate error during the trial, and the judgment must be affirmed. *Stevens v. Gladding*, 570.
  30. Where plaintiff in error relies on a ruling of the court at the trial to reverse the judgment here, that ruling must be shown by bill of exceptions, or in some other mode be made to appear on the record, or it will not be noticed. *Lathrop v. Judson*, 571.
  31. This rule is so well settled that, in the absence of anything in the record which relates to the error assigned, the court will affirm the judgment with damages. *Ib.*
  32. In the State courts of Louisiana, where bills of exception are unknown, and the opinions of the supreme court are by statute made part of the record, the opinion will be examined here, to learn what questions were decided. *Cousin v. Labatut*, 645.
  33. In an action of ejectment brought to this court by defendant below, against whom there was a judgment, this court cannot order an increased amount of security, by way of enlarged bond, on the ground of apprehended loss to defendant in error. *Roberts v. Cooper*, 769.
  34. On a question certified to this court, on division of opinion, where the facts on which the answer must depend are not sufficiently stated in the record, the court will refuse to answer, and remand the case for further proceedings. *United States v. City Bank of Columbus*, 781.

ARBITRATION, 3; JURISDICTION OF SUPREME COURT, 1, 5, 10, 15.

#### RES JUDICATA.

1. Where a statute forbid the sale of lands under execution until eighteen months after the death of a decedent, the order of a court of competent jurisdiction, directing a sale on a particular day, is a judicial decision that the time has elapsed and cannot be questioned collaterally. *Griffith v. Roberts*, 139.
2. In an action of ejectment, plaintiffs having proved title in their ancestor to one undivided fourth of the premises in suit, were met by a deed from their ancestor conveying the property under a partition decree, to which his vendee and plaintiffs were parties. They offered to prove that the deed from their father was obtained by fraud, and that he was of unsound mind when it was made. Held, that they were



not estopped from proving this by the decree of partition: 1. Because the nature of the partition suit did not involve the validity of conveyance of their ancestor, and no judgment was therefore passed on the matter now set up to defeat that deed. 2. Because the decree of partition, however it might affect a separation of interests, was not binding on plaintiffs, (who were non-residents, and never appeared or were served with process within the jurisdiction of the court,) as to the title to said property. *McCall v. Carpenter*, 250.

3. Recitals in the deeds of partition made by a commissioner under the decree of the court can have no more effect than the decree of the court itself. *Ib.*
4. This suit is between the same parties, and involves the same subject-matter, as the case reported in 11 How. 232; 18 Curtis, 609. *Stockton v. Ford*, 353.
5. That suit is therefore a bar to the relief sought in the present suit; notwithstanding the plaintiff now endeavors to recover for attorney's fees and other costs. *Ib.*
6. The frame of the bill in the former case was one under which this claim might have been set up and litigated, and ought to have been set up, if intended to be asserted at all. It cannot be made the foundation of a new suit, to enforce it against the same property that was the subject of the former litigation. *Ib.*
7. The plea of the general issue in trespass does not put in issue the title, and therefore is not conclusive on that point in another suit. But in Massachusetts it is received as *prima facie* evidence. *Richardson v. The City of Boston*, 675.

#### STATUTES OF STATES.

##### —CONSTRUCTION AND EFFECT IN FEDERAL COURTS.

1. This court follows the decisions of the State courts in the construction of the laws constituting their local jurisprudence. *Beauregard v. City of New Orleans*, 422.
2. Hence, when the State courts of Louisiana have carefully and laboriously considered the precise questions raised in the present case, which have reference to the jurisdiction of the probate and district courts, and to the effect of sales made by their orders, this court will receive those decisions as the best evidence of the law on these subjects. *Ib.*
3. The cases referred to and examined. *Ib.*
4. The 7th article of the treaty with France, proclaimed August 12, 1853, which relates to the right to hold and inherit property by French citizens, has relation only to rights of inheritance thereafter acquired. *Prevost v. Greneaux*, 521.
5. The tax of the State of Louisiana upon successions is due upon the event of the death and vesting of the property in the successor. Hence, where the ancestor dies in 1848, the right to the succession tax vested in the State, and could not be affected by the treaty. *Ib.*
6. *Quere*: Would the treaty be obligatory on the State, as to future successions, if their own courts had not decided that it was? *Ib.*
7. In a contract for the sale of a vessel made and performed in Louisiana, the law of that State governs, though the vendee is a citizen of New York. *Bulkley v. Honold*, 786.
8. The code of Louisiana governs such a contract, and not any rule of admiralty law. *Ib.*
9. By that code the vendor is responsible for a secret defect in the vessel unknown to either vendor or vendee. *Ib.*
10. By the same law the vendee can either return the property and sue for the consideration, or retain the property and sue for damages. *Ib.*
11. The laws framed by the commissioners for the territory of the northwest, under the ordinance of 1787, left out the words "beyond the seas" in the disability clause of the statute of limitation, but in the publication made by order of congress they were included. *Pease v. Peck*, 512.
12. *Quere*: Whether thirty years' acquiescence in the law, as published by the courts and the people, may not be taken as settling the law in that form? *Ib.*

13. However this may be, when the legislative body of the State have, in two revisions of its statutes, adopted the form as published, these revisions being intended to embrace alterations and amendments, this must be taken to be the law of the land. *Ib.*
14. The law of a State limiting the remedies of its citizens in its own courts cannot be applied to prevent the citizens of other States from suing in the courts of the United States in that State, for the recovery of any money or property there to which they may be legally or equitably entitled. *Suydam v. Brodnax*, 14 Peters, 67, reaffirmed. *Union Bank of Tennessee v. Jolly's Administrators*, 429.
15. Therefore, where a defendant died pending suit in the federal court, and his administrators were made defendants, and a judgment was recovered against them, they cannot evade the payment of that judgment, with assets in their hands, by showing proceedings in a probate court which settled up the estate, without reference to plaintiff's judgment or claim. *Ib.*

CALIFORNIA LAND GRANTS, 15; COLLISION, 5; CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, 10, 11, 12; COPYRIGHT, 1; NEGOTIABLE PAPER, 3; OYSTER BEDS, 1-8.

#### TAX TITLE.

1. The act of congress of May 26, 1824, amending the charter of the city of Washington, declares that no sale of property for taxes shall be void by reason of its not being assessed or advertised in the name of the lawful owner thereof. Held, that a sale was valid, though James Thomas, in whose name the property was assessed and advertised, was dead when the taxes were levied. *Holroyd v. Pumphrey*, 57.
2. That it did not invalidate the sale to show that the lots were advertised in the name of James Thomas's heirs, and bid off at a sale in a previous year for the same taxes, it appearing that said sale was never carried out by payment of the bid or deed to the bidder. *Ib.*
3. Where an officer authorized to assess lands for taxation is required to take an oath of office, his assessment made before taking the oath is invalid. If his neglect to file his assessment in proper office and give notice within a time specified by statute are material, a sale and deed made by him will, for these reasons, be set aside in chancery. *Parker v. Overman*, 121.

COURT AND JURY, 1, 3.

#### TIME.

##### ——COMPUTATION OF.

1. A statute of Missouri forbid a sale under execution of lands of decedent until eighteen months after letters of administration granted. This was done on the 1st day of November, 1819, and the sale made by order of court on the 1st day of May, 1821. Held to be a compliance with the statute. *Griffith v. Bogert*, 139.
2. There is no settled rule as to whether the first or the last day of the two periods shall be included in the computation; and courts will construe the matter so as to confirm, and not overthrow, rights acquired in good faith under a fair transaction. *Ib.*

#### TEXAS LAND TITLES.

1. By the laws of Mexico prior to the revolution in Texas, no one could hold land there who did not reside in Mexico. *McKinney v. Saviego*, 193.
2. By the law of Texas, persons who left Texas at the time of the revolution for other parts of Mexico, and continued to reside without the limits of Texas, forfeited their title to lands in Texas. *Ib.*
3. The introduction of the common law, as the basis of the law of Texas, did not aid such persons. *Ib.*
4. Consequently no citizen of Mexico dying in Mexico could transmit by inheritance title to land in Texas to a person also a citizen of Mexico. *Ib.*

5. The 8th section of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had reference to the territory acquired by the United States by that treaty, and did not refer to Texas. *Ib.*

## WILLS.

## ———CONSTRUCTION OF.

1. The testator, by his will, said: "I give to my two sons, John and Jacob Kittredge, all my lands and buildings in Andover, except the land I have given to my son Thomas," describing the lands; also all my live stock, husbandry tools, bonds, notes, &c., &c., to my sons John and Jacob, to be equally divided between them. He also provided that out of this his debts and funeral expenses should be paid, and then added: "It is my will that if either of my said sons, namely, John and Jacob, should happen to die without any lawful heirs of their own, then the share of him who may first decease may accrue to the other and his heirs." Held, that John and Jacob took an estate in fee-simple, and that the share of the one of the sons who should die first without issue in the lifetime of the other should in that event go over to the other son by way of executory devise. *Abbott v. Essex Company*, 170.
2. The law of Pennsylvania substituting all the children for the oldest son adopts, with the common law, so modified, its rule that heirs can only be disinherited by express words of a will or by necessary implication. *Wilkins v. Allen*, 331.
3. A specific devise to the wife of a life estate in certain lots, and a charge upon the real and personal estate of an amount in her favor, followed by sundry specific legacies, and devise of all the surplus to the benefit of a church, does not, either by express words or necessary implication, disinherit the heirs of the real estate. *Ib.*
4. Nor can extrinsic evidence of memoranda, made by the testator, or of the value of the personal estate, showing its insufficiency to meet the specific legacies or to leave any surplus, be received to aid in the construction of the will. The English authorities considered. *Ib.*

## ———PROBATE OF.

1. The courts of the United States, having no probate jurisdiction, act upon the sentences and decrees of the State courts on such subjects as valid judgments. *Fou-  
vergne v. City of New Orleans*, 398.
2. Where a will in New Orleans was admitted to probate by the only tribunal possessing jurisdiction in 1792, and the property was distributed and held under it without dispute for over fifty years, and no proof is given to assail it for fraud or collusion, it must be held conclusive, both as to the validity of the probate in law and its fairness on the facts. *Ib.*

EVIDENCE, 13, 14.











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